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DISTRICT OF MAINE, 1863

That on the 15th day of
the month of June, 1863,
the said District Court, in
the case of the said

GARDINER

ON THE

THEATRE.

DISTRICT OF MAINE, to wit,

* * * * *
* L. S. *
* * * * *

BE it remembered, That on the ninth day of April, in the sixteenth year of the Independence of the United States of America, JOHN GARDINER, Esq. of the said district, hath deposited in this Office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Author, in the words following, to wit: "The Speech of John Gardiner, Esq. delivered in the House of Representatives, on Thursday, the twenty sixth day of January, 1792; on the subject of the Report of the Committee appointed to consider the expediency of repealing the Law against Theatrical Exhibitions, within this Commonwealth." In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned."

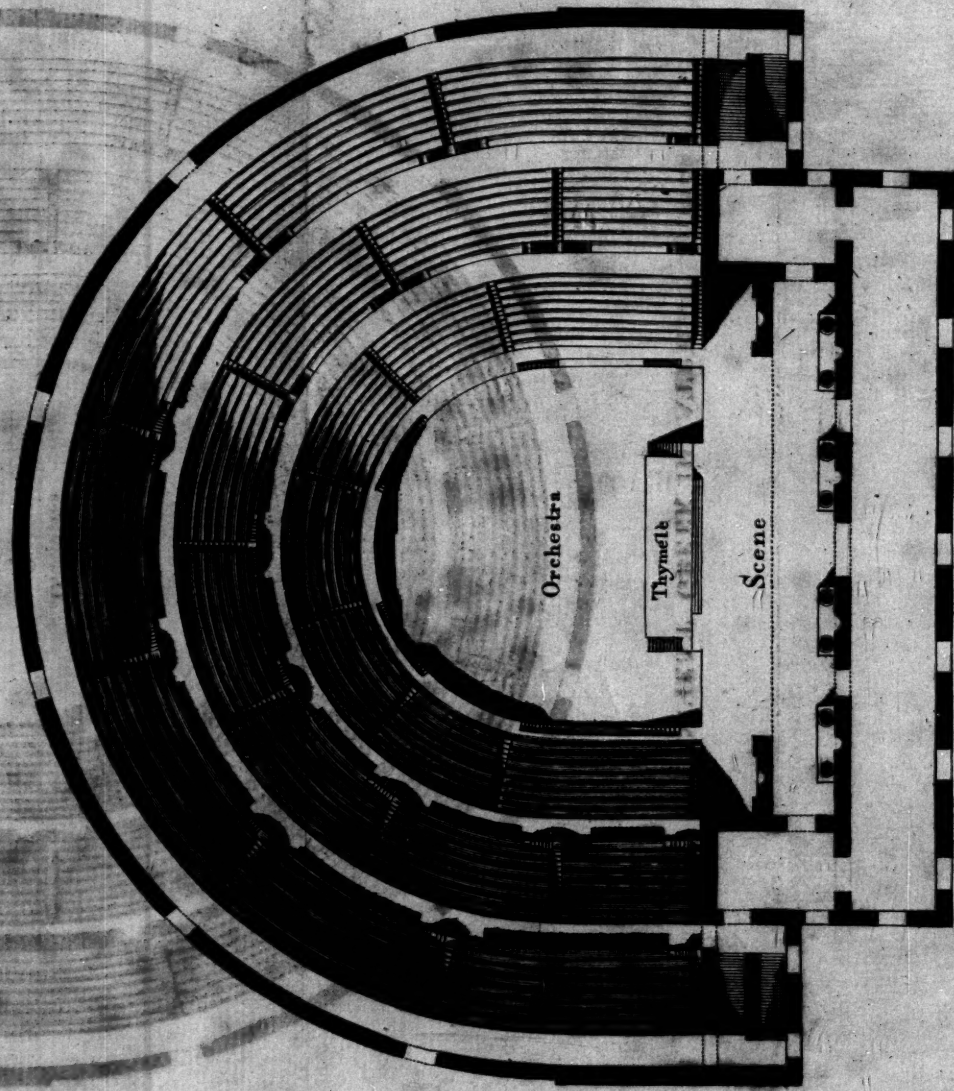
HENRY SEWALL, Clerk of the
District of Maine.

A true copy as of Record.

Attest. H. Sewall, Cler.



ANCIENT GREEK THEATRE.



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Feet

EXPLANATION of the PLATE, or plan of the Ancient
GREEK THEATRE.

THE Plate is copied from the Travels of *Anacharsis the younger*, by the ABBE BARTHELMI.

The *Orchestra* was the place in the middle of the theatre, at the further end of which arose the stage on which the *chorus* exhibited. *Orchestra* is derived from the Greek word ὀρχήστραι, in Latin, *salio*, in English, *to dance*. On this stage the *chorus* moved, danced, and sung, to the sound of the musical instruments. In the Roman theatres this place was, also, called *cavea*, and *arena*.—*Cavea* the *pit*, cave or hollow, vacant place; in which were often exhibited their shows of gladiators, and of wild beasts. It was called *arena* because it was covered with sand, to prevent the combatants from slipping; as, otherwise, they would have often trod in the blood, shed in the combat, and been liable to slip and fall.

Thymele is the altar of *Bacchus*, placed in the front of the stage, and somewhat elevated above it; Θυμῆλην, *altare, ara Bacchi post orchestram*.

The author of the travels of *Anacharsis* observes, that this "theatre was at first built with wood; but having fallen down during the performance of a piece by an ancient author, named Pratinas," *this*, which stood near the south-east corner of the citadel," (of Athens) "was erected of stone. If I should undertake to describe it, I should neither satisfy those who have seen it, nor those who have not; I shall therefore only give a plan of it, and add some remarks," &c.

"1st. During the representation no person *was* permitted to remain in the *calon*, or pit, experience having shewn that unless this *was* entirely empty, the voice of the actors *would* be less distinctly heard."

"2d. The *proscenium*, or stage, is divided into two parts; the one higher, on which the actors *declaimed*, and the other lower, in which the chorus commonly was placed. This latter *was* raised ten or twelve feet above the pit, from which there *was* an ascent to it. In this situation it was easy for the chorus to turn either towards the actors or towards the spectators."

"3d. As the theatre *was* not covered, it sometimes *happened* that a sudden shower *obliged* the spectators to take refuge

refuge in the porticos, or the public buildings near the place."

"4th. In the spacious enclosure of the theatre were exhibited the contests in poetry, music, and dancing, with which the grand solemnities were accompanied. It was consecrated to glory; yet *has been* seen, on the same day, a piece of Euripides followed by an exhibition of puppets."

"Tragedies and comedies were only presented to the public during the three festivals solemnized in honour of Bacchus."

Travels of Anacharsis the younger,
No. LXX. Vol. VI. page 61.

The reason of the altar of BACCHUS being placed in the front of the stage, I apprehend, was to shew that the drama was intended as a religious solemnity or exhibition in honour of that heathen deity, at the celebration of whose festival it took its rise, or had its origin.

Scene, the stage on which the chorus exhibited.

The scale of 20 toises is equal to 100 English feet.

The three tier, or rows, of seats for the spectators, with the several passages leading round them, and the avenues to them are seen at one view of the plate.

Whoever would wish for further satisfaction, as to the ancient Greek Theatre, are referred to *Franklin's SOPHOCLES*.

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THE
S P E E C H
OF
JOHN GARDINER, ESQUIRE.
DELIVERED IN THE R
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

On Thursday, the 26th of January, 1792 ;

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE,
APPOINTED TO CONSIDER THE EXPEDIENCY
OF REPEALING THE LAW AGAINST THEATRICAL
EXHIBITIONS WITHIN THIS COMMONWEALTH.

" To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
" To raise the genius, and to mend the heart :
" To make mankind, in conscious virtue bold,
" Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold ;
" For this the *Tragic Muse* first trod the stage,
" Commanding tears to stream thro' every age ;
" Tyrants no more their savage nature kept,
" And foes to virtue wonder'd how they wept." — POPE.

Quod si non hic tantus fructus ostenderetur, et si ex his studia delectatio sola peteretur : tamen, ut opinor, hanc animi remissionem, humanissimam, ac liberalissimam judicaretis. Nam ceteræ neque ætatum omnium, neque locorum. Hæc studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium præbent, delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur. Quod si ipsi hæc neque attingere, neque sensu nostro gustare possimus, tamen ea mirari debemus, etiam cum in aliis videremus.

CICERO, pro ARCHIA POETA.

TRANSLATION.

" But were pleasure only to be derived from learning, without the advantages we have mentioned, you must still, I imagine, allow it to be a very liberal and polite amusement. For other studies are not suited to every time, to every age, and to every place ; but *these* give strength in youth, and joy in old age ; adorn prosperity, and are the support and consolation of adversity ; at home they are delightful, and abroad easy, at night they are company to us, when we travel they attend us ; and in our rural retirements they do not forsake us. Though we ourselves were incapable of them, and had no relish for their charms, still we should admire them when we see them in others." — *Whitworth's* CICERO.

PRINTED AT THE Apollo Press, IN BOSTON,
FOR THE AUTHOR
MDCXCII,

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TO THE PUBLIC.

THE following speech, which was composed, or, rather, chiefly compiled, in a hurry, in the early morning hours of the present Session of the General Court, now appears in print, in pursuance of the repeated, particular requests of many intimate friends, as well members of the House of Representatives as others. The subject being new, and little understood among us, numerous authors were applied to, in order the more fully to investigate and elucidate the history and nature of the DRAMA, as well as to prove the perfect innocence and rationality of proper THEATRICAL EXHIBITIONS. Some furious bigots will, perhaps, condemn, and others ridicule this attempt; while a few of the more learned, liberal, and enlightened, may applaud that effort which attempts to dispel the dark fogs of an absurd, blind, superstition, and to permit the cheering beams of the enlightening SUN of MANLY REASON to shine in upon us.

*To such as may so condemn, or ridicule, I will answer, in the words of CICERO; Ego vero fateor, me his studiis esse deditum: Ceteros pudeat, siqui ita se litteris abdididerunt, ut nihil possint ex his neque ad communem afferre fructum, neque in adspectum lucemque proferre. Me autem quid pudeat, qui tot annos ita vivo, ut ab nullius unquam me tempore aut commodum, aut otium meum abstraxerit, aut voluptas avocarit, aut denique somnus retardarit? Quare quis tandem me reprehendat? Aut quis mihi jure succenseat? &c.**

Since the speech was delivered, the author hath added the observations on the Greek Comedy, and the account of the several Theatres in the various parts of the Continent of EUROPE: he hath also added several notes; for one of which, in particular, he acknowledges himself much indebted to his learned and very valuable friend, Mr. Thaddeus Mafon Harris, the Librarian of our University of CAMBRIDGE, who, to the elegant, classic attainments of the scholar, happily unites

* "I am fond of these studies, I own: Let those be ashamed who have buried themselves in learning so as to be of no use to society, nor able to produce any thing to public view; but why should I be ashamed, who for so many years have never been prevented by indolence, seduced by pleasure, nor diverted by sleep, from doing good offices to others. Who then can censure me, or, in justice be angry with me? ——— *Whitworth's CICERO.*

unites the polished, liberal manners of a gentleman. Free use hath been made of, and copious extracts taken from, the various authors, to whom application hath been made for the principal materials of which the speech may be properly said to be in a great measure compiled. In general, the authors, from whom he hath made extracts, are quoted, or mentioned by name; though sometimes they are not, as the extracts appear in somewhat a different dress from their originals. If his fellow citizens should find any amusement or instruction in the perusal of this speech, one design of the author will, in some small degree, be answered by the present publication; but should it, on the whole, prove so efficacious as to unlock the minds of some of the more prejudiced, and, thereby, prove the means of procuring a repeal of, or, hereafter, prevent the continuation of that ungenerous, unsocial, barbarian, temporary, statute, which now attempts to prevent the very rational amusements of the THEATRE among us, his principal end and design will be fully answered, and satisfaction, the most complete, be afforded to many worthy and virtuous citizens, as well as to the author.

A poor, nerveless, paragraph manufacturer, in the Apollo, of the 3d of this present month of February, hath given us an extract from the "judicious Doctor BEATTIE," professor of moral philosophy in the University of ABERDEEN, to prove that the author hereof is wrong, in regard to his observation, that "the cause of religion may receive aid from the establishment of a well regulated Theatre among us; as, from some of the actors, a few of our dull, droning, heavy, dray-horses, in black gowns and bands, may catch a little animation, unlearn their present barbarous mode of pronunciation, and acquire some little proper action." The extract from BEATTIE, however, by no means, proves what it is adduced for—to contradict the author of this speech; for that extract only proves that the character of a THEATRICAL ACTOR, considered, in the abstract, as a mere Actor, is a very different character from that of a Christian Divine. But, supposing that Doctor BEATTIE had asserted what the poor, miserable quoter would have had him assert—I would ask, who is this same "judicious Doctor BEATTIE?"—A writer, by no means, of the first rate abilities—if credit may be given to one of the first scholars in Europe; who, in a letter, bearing date the 27th day of March, 1779, thus speaks of the
Scots

Scots Universities, and of their learning, and particularly, of this same "judicious Doctor BEATTIE."—"In physic, the Scotch Universities certainly deserve the palm; but, otherwise, their learning is scanty, their politics detestable, their science very superficial; and as to their metaphysics"—I look with contempt upon BEATTIE—with abhorrence upon HUME."—So much for the judicious Doctor BEATTIE.

The bright SUN of REASON is rising fast upon us; the thick fogs of superstition must, necessarily, be dispelled and vanish before the ascending luminary, and the dark, gloomy bigot must soon go off the stage of life; when a new set of Actors will appear, of more liberal ideas, and of a more refined taste, formed to enjoy the polished refinements of social life, and to delight in the rational entertainments of a chaste and well regulated Theatre. The old things are rapidly doing away;—already (within the last twenty years) the face of the political and of the moral world is changed—and greatly for the better; for, metaphorically speaking, there is now new heavens and a new earth.—*Novus nascitur Ordo!*

J. GARDINER.

Boston, Feb. 22, 1792.

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GARDINER'S

S P E E C H

ON THE

T H E A T R E.



MR. SPEAKER!

AS the DRAMA and THEATRICAL EXHIBITIONS have been hitherto unknown in this country, and their history, nature, and tendency little understood, even to a vast majority of members now present, I have lately dedicated a small portion of my *early morning hours*, from the other public business, to investigate this subject, the result of which I will now endeavour to submit to the House; at the same time, entreating their patient attention, and partial indulgence, if I deviate, on this occasion, from my usual mode of extemporaneous speaking, and often

often recur to, and read from, my notes, the many observations which I have collected upon this subject: For, as I have been obliged to consult a great variety of authors, as well ancient as modern, on the occasion, from whom it was necessary to make copious extracts, I apprehend no memory, however strong, can so perfectly retain them all, as to repeat them accurately; more especially, when it is considered that the extracts were so recently made, and in the hurry of the session of the General Court.

Having offered thus much, by way of *exordium*, I must say that I give *my heartiest dissent* to the report now under consideration; a report which the majority of your committee, Sir, ordered and enjoined me to lay upon your Honour's table. The committee, who made that report, consisted of seven members; two of whom were, most unequivocally, decided in favour of the report; two others of that committee, with *myself*, were as determinedly against the same; the other two of that committee (the worthy member from *Kingston*, and the worthy member from *Worcester*) gave their voices in favor of the report, *as then advised*; both of those gentlemen declaring (if I then understood them right) that it was a subject *they* were not perfectly acquainted with, and, therefore, that *they* could not, without seeing their way more clear, consent to the repeal of a law of this Commonwealth, which had been in force for above *forty years* last past. In stating these facts to the House, the other day, I intended not the most distant reflection, Sir, upon either of those respectable gentlemen, one of whom lodges in the same house with myself, and with whom I am upon terms of familiarity and friendship; but there are some among us, in this House, who presume to take too much upon themselves, and attempt to *controul* and *direct*, where they have no other right than merely

to *advise*, and *attempt to persuade*. For my own part, Sir, I will not submit to be led by ignorance, nor to be dictated to by insolence; but will ever act from myself, with becoming indignation spurn from me the supercilious, chattering, insolent, and, while I have the honor of a seat in this House, with manly fortitude, will uniformly assert the unequivocal independence of one of the representatives of a free people.

MR. SPEAKER,

If I regard *the rights of man*; if I wish well to the interests of the place of my nativity; if I regard the social happiness, the emolumentary advantages of the merchant, the shopkeeper, the mechanic, and the *principal manufacture* of this great town, I can do no other than give my feeble voice, and raise my weak hand, to carry into effect the wishes of the town, as contained and expressed in its instructions to its representatives; for, as to the *remonstrance of a number of individuals*, however respectable it may be, from the numbers and characters of the remonstrants, it appears to me, Sir, to be a very irregular mode of attacking the *public voice of the corporation*; and therefore, in my opinion, no further notice of that remonstrance ought to be taken, than to permit the same to lie upon your Honor's table. The *majority ought to govern*, in all societies; and in the town-meeting, at *Faneuil-hall*, when the question, THEATRE, or NO THEATRE, was agitated, the majority for a THEATRE was very great, if I am truly informed; there appearing near *three to one* in favor of a THEATRE.

That MAN has a *natural*, an inherent, an *unalienable right to think*, I apprehend will not be denied, at this day; that he has an equal right to *commit those thoughts to writing*, I suppose, will not now be contradicted; that when such thoughts are committed to writing, none,

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at this time, I presume, will be hardy enough to assert that he has not plenary right to read, or, to hire, or procure, another to read such writing to, or for, him, either in private or in public; provided there be nothing, in such writing, injurious to his neighbour, or of an immoral tendency, and which may affect the peace, or good order of civil society. To restrain a man from the free exercise of such undeniable, *natural rights*, in my humble opinion, is a most violent outrage upon *true civil liberty*; to attempt to prohibit him from the freest, and fullest enjoyment of *all such rights*, perfect *despotism*, and the worst of all oppression. But, as this part of the subject will, doubtless, be touched by a much abler hand, receive a more thorough investigation, disquisition, and convincing demonstration, from my very worthy and truly excellent friend, on the other side of the House, even from the towering BALD EAGLE of the *Boston-seat*,* to whom I am, in a great measure, indebted for these imperfect sketches of THE RIGHTS OF MAN, I will, at present, decline offering any thing further on *this head*.

That a THEATRE will be of very general, and great emolumentary, advantage to the town of Boston, I think, Sir, none can deny, who will give themselves time to consider that a THEATRE will call for the aid of the mason, the brick-layer, the carpenter, the housewright, the smith, the carver, the painter, the gilder, the glazier, &c. to erect, prepare, and finish the necessary buildings for dramatic performances. When the house and necessary buildings are erected, decorated, and completed, still there will, and must, be a further call for numerous artificers and mechanics, to prepare the *scenery*, the necessary *machinery*, and the *wardrobe*.

* Dr. JARVIS.

wardrobe. The carpenter, the house-wright, the smith, the *manufacturers of duck*, or sail-cloth, the tinman, the turner, the painter, and the gilder, with various other tradesmen, must lend *their aid* and handycraft assistance, as well as the merchant, the shop-keeper, the taylor, the robe-maker, the mantua-maker, and even the milliner, and the shoe-maker, who must be called upon for *their cloths, their silks, their laces, their duck, their colours and skill; their finery, and their leather*, and work; as well as for many other articles, and various other materials, and labour, necessary to furnish and compleat all the numerous requisites of embellishment, of dress, of scenery, and of machinery, which are indispensible to a *modern, improved, THEATRE*: Nay, Sir, I do not know but even the *honourable fraternity of rope-makers* may possibly be called upon (notwithstanding the present abhorrent averfion of some of that craft to the manly and truly liberal entertainments of the THEATRE) for such articles of *their manufacture* as may be wanted, in ringing of bells, gibbeting villains and traitors, in effigy at least, and in properly tying the arms, and securing the hands, of silly fools, raving madmen, and *ranting fanatics*! All these trades and orders of citizens, therefore, will, undoubtedly, be benefited by a THEATRE in this town. Other descriptions and orders of the *inhabitants of Boston* (among which are that most useful body of men, the PRINTERS) must necessarily receive emolumentary advantages from such a THEATRE. Strangers, especially from the *West-Indies* and the *Southward*, who visit us, complain much of the want of public places of resort, for innocent and rational amusement; as, in the *summer* and the *fall* months, our only public places of resort, for amusement (the *Concert* and *Assemblies*) are dead, and unknown among us. Those, as well as all other strangers,

strangers, who honour us with their company, universally acknowledge, admire, and applaud, the general good humour, the *unbounded hospitality*, (for which the town of Boston has ever been eminently distinguished) the laudable humanity, uniform decency, courteous manners, and general urbanity of its inhabitants; yet, for want of some public place, or places, of *rational entertainment* and *innocent amusement* to resort to, they too often find the dull hours hang heavy upon their hands; when they leave us for New-York or Philadelphia; where, in the THEATRE, they can innocently recreate themselves with "*The feast of reason and the flow of soul.*"—Now, Sir, did the town of Boston possess a *well regulated* THEATRE, these strangers would, most probably, spend double the periods of time they generally pass in this town. Great advantages, in such a case, would, surely, result to the stable keepers, the keepers of lodging houses, to the wine merchant, to the smith, the coach maker, the harness maker, the painter, the owners of hackney coaches, and to various other mechanics and professions, as well as to the shopkeeper, the taylor, the hair dresser, the shoe maker, the milliner, the tavern keeper, and others; who would thereby, experience an increase of business and of profit; and from the increased continuance of such strangers among us, even the butcher, the baker, the milk man, &c. would be, in some small degree, benefited, and, thereby, eventually, the *landed interest*, as well as the *commercial, mechanical, and manufacturing*, business, would receive some additional, emolumentary benefit and advantage.

The illiberal, unmanly and despotical act, which now prohibits THEATRICAL EXHIBITIONS among us, to me, Sir, appears to be the brutal, monstrous, spawn of a sour, envious, morose, malignant, and truly benighted

ighted superstition; which, with her impénétrable fogs, hath but too long begloomed and disgraced this rising country!—a country, by nature, intended for the production and cultivation of *sound reason*, and of an enlightened, manly, freedom!—From the same detestable, canting, hypocritic, spirit was generated that abominable, *Hutchinsonian*.* WARDEN ACT; which hath twice, in my time, been reprobated by the House of Representatives, who passed two several bills for its repeal; although, it seems, it could not be given up by certain *Simon Pures*, the sanctified zealots, of *former Senates*. It is to be lamented that this hypocritic, unconstitutional, act is still permitted to disgrace our statute book; while every man who has duly investigated the *sacred principles of civil liberty* contemns, and, with the enlightened town of Boston, abhors, and pays not the smallest respect, the least attention, to this abominable, impotent, act. Notwithstanding Boston *annually refuses* to chuse the *tyrannical wardens*, I would ask, where, under the sun, are there, on the *Sabbath day*, a more decent, orderly, people than the inhabitants of this great, commercial, sea-faring town, who, thus continue to treat, with due contempt, that hypocritic, nefarious act?†

Sir!

* The parricidious traitor, *Governor Hutchinson*, to deceive the old women into a belief of his sanctity, generated this tyrannic act.

† The day after the delivery of this speech, on the motion of *Doctor JARVIS*, a committee of the House was appointed, to bring in a bill to repeal certain parts of the *Warden Act*: The honorable *Senate* afterwards sent down a bill, for repealing, *in toto*, this hypocritic, this tyrannic, statute, with which the House concurred; and which the Governor cheerfully assenting to; this detestable production of *Hutchinson*, was, at length, finally blasted.

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Sir! I really and truly *venerate*; I should rather say, I *sincerely*, and almost *enthusiastically*, *admire*—the many great, and splendid virtues of our renowned, *puritan ancestors*; who were, as is most justly said of them, in the preface to HUBBARD's *History of the Indian Wars*, published near one hundred and twenty years ago, “men of whom the world was not worthy;” but still, Sir, they were only *men*; and like all other *men*, were fallible; liable to frailties, to prejudices, and to error. Some errors, and some unjust prejudices, they, undoubtedly, had. Would to God, a veil was drawn over *all their absurd prejudices*, which, like the spots in the sun, tend, in some small degree, to be-darken and obscure the, otherwise, truly-resplendent glories of their character! One of those absurd prejudices, in my opinion, was their inveterate opposition, and abhorrent aversion, to the THEATRE. Although it was an invariable maxim with them, that “*The further from ROME, the nearer to GOD*,” yet, did they agree with the ROMAN CATHOLICS, during the infamous and disgraceful reign of that royal conjurer, that abominable monster, JAMES the I, as well as in the days of his obtruncated son, CHARLES STUART, of bloody and dissembling memory; that *burlesque saint* of the uncharitable, dissembler-damning *Episcopalians* of the high, *English church*, that, “*The drama was not lawful to Christians!*” Now, Sir, whoever is read in the history of the DRAMA, must know, that the *ancient drama* took its rise in *religion*. I suppose myself to be as well read, as thoroughly conversant, in the sacred scriptures as any individual in the legislature of this country; perhaps, as perfectly acquainted therewith as any *divine* in this, or any other State in the union; and yet, I can safely aver, that, after the most attentive search through the whole BIBLE, I cannot find *one single*

single passage, therein, condemning either THEATRES or actors : On the contrary, I find, in that best of all books, many things which partake of *dramatic poetry* and of *dramatic exhibition* ; and further, I find *St. Paul*, who was, by far, the most learned of all the Apostles, borrowing whole sentences, and quoting several divine passages from the Greek poets, and *Greek writers of comedy* ; which appear, as, well, in the Acts of the Apostles, as in those, his, epistles, which all true and sincere Christians believe, and acknowledge, to be *inspired writings*. Thus, when PAUL was at ATHENS, we find him quoting that divine hemistic, from ARATUS of Cilicia (Paul's own country) who was a *Greek poet*, and an astrologer, who lived about three hundred years before the Apostle, and whose words, as transplanted into the Acts of the Apostles, (xvii. 28.) are,

——— "Του γὰρ γένος ἐσμεν."

For we are his offspring.

The same passage, with very little variation, is to be found in an admirable hymn, to the SUPREME GOD, by the poet and stoic philosopher, CLEANTHES, the successor of ZENO ; whose words are

"Ἐκ σου γὰρ γένος ἐσμεν."

This hymn of CLEANTHES is replete with warm sentiments of rational devotion.* So, again, 1 Cor.

xv.

* Clemens Alexandrinus retains a great part of the hymn, in his Stromata, lib. iv. p. 436. (Edit. Heinsius. fol. Lug. Bat. 1616.) "I know not if any of the commentators have thought of this, or seen it, nor is it certain that Paul had. But if the Apostle had seen it, it appears most probable that he would quote the poet of later date (as those he addressed would more readily recollect what poet he meant ;) and one whose sentiments agreed, in many respects, with the morality he was then teaching, than an old writer, whose works, it is most probable,

xv. 33. "*Evil communications corrupt good manners,*" is a quotation from a *Greek comedy*, written by the excellent *Greek comic poet*, MENANDER, of the city of ATHENS; who was remarkable for the sweetness, brevity, perspicuity, and sententiousness, of his style; and whom TERENCE, the Roman, comic, poet, is continually imitating, or rather, according to CICERO and others, almost literally translating. This comic poet is said to have written no less than *one hundred and eight*, or, according to others, *one hundred and nine comedies*, which are now, for the learned world, unfortunately lost. "The delicacy and decorum constantly observed by MENANDER, rendered him the darling writer of the ATHENIANS, at a time when that polished people were arrived at the height of prosperity and politeness, and could no longer relish the coarse railleries, the brutal mirth, and illiberal wit, of an indecent

probable, were then in the memory and possession of but a few." For this note, as well as the quotation from the hymn of CLEANTHES, I am indebted to my learned friend, Mr. Harris, the Librarian; but as PAUL quoted the very words of ARATUS, I am satisfied he is the poet the Apostle alludes to. And see the third volume of the ADVENTURER, on the fragments of MENANDER, No. 105.

The modern apologist of *Aristophanes*, the learned and elegant author of *The Observer*, the first four volumes of which work I have lately seen, and which I regret I was not sooner acquainted with, remarks, that "In the general purport of his moral, he (*Aristophanes*) seldom, if ever, fails; but he works occasionally with unclean tools, and, like Juvenal in the lower ages, chastises vice by an open exposure of its turpitude, *offending the ear*, while he aims to mend the heart. This habit of *plain speaking was the fashion of the times he wrote in*, and the audience demanded, and would have it; that he may be studied by the *purest readers* we should conclude, when we are told *he was the pillow companion of a Christian saint*, as the well known anecdote of *Chrysostom* will testify."

The Observer, No. LXXV.

indecent *Aristophanes*.* In the first chapter of the Epistle of PAUL to Titus, the twelfth verse, the Apostle observes of the Cretians, that "one of themselves even a PROPHET" (it should have been translated a POET) "of their own, said, the Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." And PAUL certifies, in the next verse, that "this witness is true." The passage here quoted, by the Apostle, is from the Greek of EPIMENIDES (by way of eminence called THE CHARMER) a native of Gnosſus, in CRETE, a poet of most excellent moral character; whose words are, as quoted literally by the Apostle,

"Κρητες αει ψευσαι κακα θηρια γαστερες αργαι."

Much the same thing, if I rightly remember, is said of these Cretians, by another Greek poet, even by CALLIMACHUS;† from whom, also, St. PAUL seems to have adopted that passage, in his Epistle to the Romans, xiii. 1, 2—of "all powers being from GOD; the powers that be, are ordained of GOD. Whosoever therefore, resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of GOD." I have not the Greek poet by me, at present;‡ though I believe

* "*Evil communications corrupt good manners.*" St. JEROM says these words, which in the Greek are Φθειρουσιν ηδη χρησθ' ομιλιαι κακαι, are taken from MENANDER. The line is a complete iambic, and is recited verbatim by PAUL; as may be seen, by looking into a Greek Testament.

† I have since seen the words of CALLIMACHUS, and they are—"Κρητες αει ψευσαι."

‡ I have searched the College Library for the Hymns of CALLIMACHUS, since the delivery of this speech, but in vain: I there found DODD's translation of those hymns, however, from which I have made the following extracts.

"Who strives with heaven must strive with Egypt's king, 41.

"Who dare illustrious Ptolomy defy,

"Must challenge ΠΗΓΕΒΥΣ, and the avenging sky."

"Who

I believe the Hymns and Fragments of CALLIMACHUS may be found in the *College Library*. I have *Mat. Prior's* translation of the *Hymn of CALLIMACHUS to APOLLO*, however, by me; but whether it be a good

"Who strives, &c.] See the Hymn to JUPITER, vers. 124 and seq. I do not know of any part of CALLIMACHUS superior in beauty to this: the poetry is most harmoniously sweet, the diction elegantly concise, beyond any I have ever met with, and the compliment to his prince the most delicate and refined. I have, by no means, done him justice in the translation; but Mr. *Prior* has absolutely dropt his author. I shall give you a comment upon this passage, from the ingenious Mr. BLACKWALL on the *Sacred Classics*. "There are in the Greek and Latin Classics, of the first rank, and merit, many elegant passages of high devotion to their deities, noble panegyrics upon their princes and patrons, and the most endearing expressions of respect and tenderness to their friends and favorite acquaintance. The polite poet CALLIMACHUS has places of this nature, one of which I will present to the reader, which, I think, in a few, smooth, and truly poetical lines, contains a noble and just acknowledgement of the divine institution of government, and authority of crowned heads, and the finest expressions of loyalty and duty to his own sovereign, king PTOLOMY," (to whom CALLIMACHUS was librarian.) "Besides, we find some of the sublimest morals and mysteries of religion beautifully expressed, and with the purest propriety of language, set forth in this comprehensive and strong piece of eloquence:

Κακον μακαρισσιν εριζειν.

‘Ος μαχεται μακαρισσιν εμω βασιλι μαχοιτο.

‘Ος εμω βασιλι, και Απολλωνι μαχοιτο.

Τον χορον ω πολλων, ‘οτι ‘οι κατα θυμον αιδει

Τιμσει: δυναται γαρ, επι Δει δεξις ησαι.—DODD.

The passage in the *Hymn to JUPITER*, alluded to in the preceding note, I will here subjoin, from DODD's translation of the Hymns of CALLIMACHUS, with his note thereon, page 16 and 17.

"But monarchs bend at thy eternal shrine, 120.

"By JOVE ordain'd, defended and divine.

"They rule from THEE."——

This

good translation or not I do not pretend to say; tho' there is animated poetry and fire in several passages, In that translation I find the following lines, which I suppose *Prior* would not have thus rendered, had there been nothing like the subject in the original.

"Against the Deity 'tis hard to strive.

"He that resists the power of Ptolomy

"Resists the power of heaven; for pow'r from heav'n

"Derives, and monarchs rule by gods appointed."

Thus we see the THEATRES and actors, not only unproved

This sentiment, that all the power and authority of kings was derived from THE SUPREME, and so, consequently, *divine*, is by no means, peculiar to our author: there is scarce any of the poets that do not agree with him: We have it in *Homer, Hesiod, Theocritus, Moschus, Pindar, Horace, Virgil, &c.* indeed *Hesiod* and *Virgil* use the same words with our author (*Callimachus*.)

— *Ex δὲ Διὸς Βασιλῆος*, says the former, and *Ab JOVE sunt reges*, the latter; and *Horace* beautifully

Regum timendorum in proprios greges,

Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis.

So, in the *Proverbs of Solomon*, wisdom says, "by me kings reign, and princes decree justice," &c. viii. 15. The reader cannot but observe, that this passage bears analogy to that of *St. Paul*, in his epistle to the *Romans*, xiii. 1. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers: For there is no power but of GOD: The powers that be, are ordained of GOD," &c. See also 1 Pet. ii. 3. *St. Paul's* word, *ordained*, (in the original *Τεταγμεναι*) I have used in the translation, as more expressive of the author's meaning.

Τῷ καὶ σφίτερον ἐκρίνασθαι λαβεῖν.

The scholiast reads *ταξιν*, for *λαβεῖν*, which I judge to be the true reading, and *St. Paul's* word, *τεταγμεναι* confirms me in this opinion. The poet places GOD *Ἀκρῆς ἐν πτολίεσσι*, in the *Citadels*, or Watch-Towers: And that, according to *Grævius*, because *Citadels* were sacred to *JUPITER*, as *Aristides*, in his Hymn, witnesseth. Hence, among the *Romans*, *JUPITER CAPITOLINUS*." — *Dodd*.

unreproved by the Apostles; but, on the contrary, we find the great Apostle to the *Heathen*, or *Gentiles*, quoting and transplanting into the sacred code, several divine truths from the *Greek* poets and *theatrical writers*, where their moral sentiments coincided and agreed with his own; and this, to me, is plenary, satisfactory proof, that our *puritan ancestors* were greatly mistaken in supposing, that *theatrical exhibitions* were *unlawful to Christians*. The Apostles went out into all lands, instructed and commanded to convert *all men* to the truth, and to censure and reprove every vice. We, accordingly, find them, in all places, severely censuring every deviation from the *moral law*, and even reproving the indecencies and unnecessary ornaments of dress, and the indelicacies of behaviour; but not one syllable drops from them, either against THEATRES, or against the *actors of stage plays*. A very strong implied evidence this, that the *theatrical exhibitions* of their times were, at least, *innocent*, if not *laudable, recreations*.

That there are many passages in the BIBLE, which partake of dramatic poetry and of dramatic exhibitions, I think, cannot be denied by a candid and attentive reader. To me, Sir, the *Song of MOSES* appears to be a sacred, *dramatic performance*: for we read in the xv. chap. of EXODUS, that "*Miriam*, the Prophetess,

In answer to these *Parasites of monarchy*, I would remark that, it appears to me, that the benevolent Creator of the universe approves of man's being in a *state of Society*; and that whatever Government *men assent to* is better for them than a *state of anarchy*. Even a *monarchical, a despotic, government* is better than a mere *state of nature*; but that a *monarchical* is the best, and only heaven-appointed Government is an absurd idea. GOD surely approved of a republican Government for the *Jews*, otherwise, he never would have punished that people, and frightened them with thunder, lightning, and with tempest, when they chose to alter their constitution, from a republic to a monarchy, the most absurd of all governments!

Prophetess, the sister of AARON, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women "went out after her, with timbrels and with dances. And MIRIAM answered them" (the men who were singing and performing that divine oratorio) "*Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.*" Here we have the exhibition; and somewhat of the chorus, of the ancient drama: the men singing, and the women dancing, and responding, in a semi-chorus, "*Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea;*" immediately after which, the whole company, (men and women) join, and burst forth into one full chorus, "*The LORD hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.*" So, when DAVID danced and played before the ark, while the singers performed that glorious Psalm of praise, recorded in the xvi. chap. of the first book of *Chronicles*, it strikes me that the whole was a sacred, dramatic, exhibition. But that there are other divine DRAMAS in the BIBLE, we have the testimony and authority of the sublime MILTON to prove, as well as the holy FATHER, ST. ORIGEN, whom MILTON quotes. "The scriptures" says MILTON; "also afford us a divine pastoral drama in the song of Solomon, consisting of two persons and a double chorus, as ORIGEN rightly judges. And the Apocalyptic" (the Revelation) "of St. John, is the majestic image of an high and stately tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies. And this, my opinion, the grave Pareus, commenting that book, is sufficient to confirm."

Whoever has read Doctor HARWOOD's *New Introduction to the study and knowledge of the New Testament*, will find, in the second volume of that curious work, an

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account

account of the customs and usages of those times mentioned or alluded to in the NEW TESTAMENT; in the first section of which are mentioned the allusions to the Grecian games, in the sacred writings; and, in sect. IV, of that learned performance, he treats of images, in the NEW TESTAMENT, borrowed from the THEATRE; wherein the author observes that, "in all countries the stage hath ever furnished different languages with the most beautiful metaphors that adorn them. In every tongue we read of the *drama of human life*: Its scenes are described as continually *shifting* and *varying*: Mortal life is represented as an intricate *plot*, which will gradually unfold, and finally *wind up* into harmony and happiness; and the world is styled a magnificent *Theatre*, in which Heaven hath placed us, assigned to every man a *character*, is a constant spectator how he *supports this character*, and will finally *applaud* or *condemn*, according to the good or bad execution of the *part*, whatever it is, he hath been appointed to *act*. I need hardly remark, though the observation is proper, for the sake of illustrating a very beautiful passage in one of St. Paul's epistles, that a variety of *scenes* are painted; and, by means of the requisite *machinery*, are very frequently *shifting*, in order to show the *characters* in a variety of *places* and *fortunes*. To the spectator, lively and affecting views are, by turns, displayed; sometimes, for example, of *Thebes*, sometimes of *Athens*, one while of a *palace*, at another of a *prison*; now of a *splendid triumph*, and now of a *funeral procession*. Every thing, from the *beginning* to the *catastrophe*, perpetually *varying* and *changing*, according to the rules and conduct of the *drama*. Agreeable to this, with what elegance and propriety doth St. Paul, whom we find quoting MENANDER, one of the most celebrated writers of the Greek comedy, represent the "FASHION OF THIS WORLD

WORLD as continually PASSING AWAY,"* and all the scenes of this vain and visionary life as perpetually shifting. "The imagery," saith Grotius, "is taken from the THEATRE, where the scenery is suddenly changed, and exhibiteth an appearance totally different." And as the transactions of the DRAMA are not real but fictitious and imaginary, such and such characters being assumed and personated, in whose joys or griefs, in whose domestic felicities or infelicities, in whose elevation or depression the actor is not really and personally interested; but only supports a character, perhaps entirely foreign from his own, and represents passions and affections in which his own heart hath no share: How beautiful and expressive, when considered in this light, is that passage in scripture wherein the Apostle is inculcating a christian indifference for this world, and exhorting us not to suffer ourselves to be unduly affected either by the joys or sorrows of so fugitive and transitory a SCENE. But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none: and they that weep as though they wept not: and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not: and they that buy as though they possessed not: and they that use this world as not abusing it. For the FASHION OF THIS WORLD PASSETH AWAY.† The reader will be pleased with the following illustration of this passage by the learned and ingenious Mr. Brekell of Liverpool. "If we keep in mind the supposed allusion in the text (*The fashion of this world passeth away*) we shall discern a peculiar beauty and force in his language and sentiment. For the actors, in a play, whether it be comedy or tragedy, do not act their

* 1 Cor. vii. 31. Παραγινε γαρ το σχῆμα του κοσμου τουτου.

† 1 Cor. vii. 29—31.

their own proper and personal concerns, but only *personate* and mimic the *characters* and conditions of other men. And so when they weep, in acting some *tragical part*, it is as though they wept not; and there is more show and appearance, than truth and reality, of grief and sorrow, in the case. On the other hand, if they rejoice, in acting some brighter scene, it is as though they rejoiced not; it is but a feigned semblance of joy, and forced air of mirth and gaiety, which they exhibit to the spectators, no real inward gladness of heart. If they seem to contract *marriages*, or act the *merchant*, or personate a *gentleman of fortune*, still it is nothing but *fiction*. And so when the play is over they have no wives, no possessions, or goods, no enjoyments of the world, in consequence of such representations. In like manner, by this apt comparison, I imagine the Apostle would teach us to moderate our desires and affections towards every thing in this world; and rather, as it were, to *personate* such things as matters of a foreign nature, than to incorporate ourselves with them, as our own proper and personal concern!"* The Theatre is also furnished with dresses suitable to every age, and adapted to every circumstance and change of fortune. The persons of the *drama*, in one and the same representation, frequently support a variety of *characters*, the prince and the beggar, the young and the old—change their dress according to the *character* in which they respectively appear, by turns laying aside *one habit*, and assuming *another*, agreeably to every condition and age. The Apostle *Paul* seems to allude to this custom; and his expressions, regarded in this light, have a peculiar beauty and energy, when he exhorts Christians to PUT OFF THE OLD MAN with his deeds, and to PUT

ON

* Berkell's Discourses, p. 318.

ON THE NEW MAN. *Coloss.* chap. iii. ver. 9, 10. And in *Ephes.* chap. iv. ver. 22, 23, 24. "That ye
 "PUT OFF, concerning the former conversation, the
 "the OLD MAN, which is corrupt according to the
 "deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your
 "minds, and that ye PUT ON THE NEW MAN, which
 "after GOD, is created in righteousness and true ho-
 "liness.*" It is well known to the learned, Sir, that
 the ancient *Tragedy* of the Greeks was, at first, no more
 than a *rustic song* in honour of BACCHUS, attending
 the sacrifice of a goat, an animal hated by that *heath-*
en god, as pretended; because the bite of a goat was
 peculiarly injurious to the vine. "What at first was
 no more than an *accidental frolic* became an *annual cus-*
tom, next a *public sacrifice*, and then an *established rite*;
 for, as every thing in Pagan antiquity was sacred,
sports and amusements were changed into *feasts*, and
 the TEMPLES were converted into THEATRES: but
 this by due degrees. The *Greeks*, advancing in
 polished manners, carried into their towns a *feast* that
 sprung from the leisure of the country: Their best
 poets took a pride in composing these *religious HYMNS*
 to the honour of BACCHUS, and embellished them
 with the agreeable entertainments of *music* and *dancing*.
 After a length of time, the songs advancing in per-
 fection, it was found necessary to give the singers
 some relief; and that the company might be amused,
 during the pauses of the music, an *actor* was intro-
 duced; † *his part* could be no other than a single
 speech, setting forth that he represented *Hercules* or
Theseus, or some other hero of antiquity, and had
 performed such or such an illustrious achievement:
 At the next pause, another personated character advanc-
 ed;

* Thus far *Doctor Harwood*.

† And see *Chambers' Dictionary*, title, CHORUS.

ed; at the next *another*; but each unrelated and unconnected with the other. This, it is imagined, was the state of the DRAMA till *Theſpis* and *Phrynicus* had the address to continue the same *interlocutor* through every pause of the music, and to make *him* the narrator of one uniform and continued story. The novelty had the good fortune to please; and as the stories were interesting, the songs in honour of *Bacchus* ceased to amuse till, by degrees, they lost their original design, and took their colouring from the intermediate representation. Such was the rude state of *Tragedy*, when *ÆSCHYLUS* conceived the great design of forming it into a new species of poetry that should rival, even the epic, in dignity. The humble arbor, interwove with vine branches, gave place to scenes of astonishing grandeur; the actor, no longer mounted on the car of *Theſpis*, with his face smeared over with lees of wine, or covered with a mask, formed from the bark of a tree, now trod a spacious stage, magnificently habited in a robe of honour and the stately buskin; even the mask, that eternal disgrace of the ATHENIAN THEATRE, wore a new and elegant form, expressive of the character represented. But these exterior decorations were proofs only of the taste of *ÆSCHYLUS*: his superior genius appeared in giving life to the piece, by introducing the dialogue, without which there could be no action; and from this circumstance it is that he is, with the highest propriety, called the *father of the drama*.* A late

* See the preface to Mr. Porter's most masterly translation of *ÆSCHYLUS*.

*Ignotum Tragicæ genus invenisse Camenæ
Dicitur; et plaustis vexisse poemata Theſpis
Qui canerent agerentque, peruneli facibus ora.
Post hunc personæ pallaque repertor honestæ*

Æschylus,

late writer of an excellent *history of Greece*,* observes of the divine, *Greek philosopher*, SOCRATES, that "How great soever might be his personal influence, the triumph of his philosophy became more illustrious and complete, after his principles were embraced by those who cultivated the *imitative arts*, and directed the public amusements, which in all countries, but particularly *Greece*, have ever produced immediate and powerful opinions and characters. In *Greece* alone the THEATRE was regarded as an object of the first importance and magnitude; it formed an essential, and by far the most splendid, part of *religious worship*; the expense of supporting it exceeded that of the army and navy together; and this celebrated entertainment, which united the *Tragedy* and the *Opera* of the moderns, was carried to perfection by a favourite disciple of SOCRATES, whose works were so universally admired in *Greece* that, in the *Sicilian war*, the *Syracusans* released from captivity those *Athenians*, and those only, who had learned to repeat the verses of EURIPIDES. This admired poet rendered the *Grecian Tragedy* complete, by perfecting the

Æschylus, et modicis instravit pulpita tignis,

Et docuit magnimque loqui, nitique cothurno.

Succesit vetus his Comædia, non sine multa

Laudæ. —

HOR. *Ars Poetica.*

"Thespis, Inventor of the tragic Art,

Carried his vagrant Players in a cart:

High o'er the crowd the mimic tribe appear'd;

And play'd and sung, with lees of wine besnear'd.

Then Æschylus a decent Vizard us'd;

Built a low Stage; the flowing Robe diffus'd.

In Language more sublime his actors rage,

And in the graceful Buskin tread the Stage.

And now the ancient comedy appear'd,

Nor without pleasure and applause was heard. — *Francis.*

* Doctor Gillies.

the CHORUS, the principal distinction between the ancient and the modern drama, and which, when properly conducted, rendered the former more regular, yet more varied, more affecting; above all, more interesting and instructive.*

"From the prevailing manners of the times, when the principal citizens lived together in crowds, and daily frequented the public halls, the *Gymnasia*, the *Forums*, and the temples, it was natural to expect the action of a *Grecian Tragedy* should consist in some great public event, which interested the whole body of the people. The scene was usually the portico of a temple, the gate of a palace, the wide expanse of a *forum* or market place. In such places many spectators must be supposed present who would naturally take part in an action which concerned the public interest and happiness. On this principle was introduced the CHORUS,

* ÆSCHYLUS was the inventor of the chorus, and applied it to *Tragedy*, as one of its greatest, and most enchanting sublimities. He divided the chorus into the *στροφῆ*, *Strophē* or *Stanza*; *αντιστροφῆ*, *Antistrophē*, (from *αντι*, the contrary way, and *στροφῆ*, turning) so called because the dance turns about; and the *Εποδῆ*, *Epodē*, being the stanza which followed the *Strophē* and the *Antistrophē*. The chorus in singing the *Strophē* moved, or marched, from the right to the left, or from east to west; in singing the *Antistrophē*, they moved the contrary way, from the left to the right, or from west to east; and, in singing the *Epodē*, they all stood still. *Sophocles* and *Euripides* sometimes gave their chorus one continued song; sometimes they divided their chorus into *Strophēs* and *Antistrophēs*; and sometimes into *Strophēs*, *Antistrophēs*, and *Epodes*. This variety in the chorus, conducted with judgment, supported by all the majesty and splendid beauties of poetry, and enriched with all the captivating charms of music (which produced a diversity of songs and dances) gave a wonderful grace to the whole representation, and afforded infinite delight and entertainment to the spectators and auditors.

CHORUS, consisting of such persons as most properly suited the occasion, and who, though not immediately or principally concerned in the catastrophe, had such general, and indirect interest, as kept them continually on the scene, and made them approve or condemn, promote or oppose the sentiments and measures of the *actors*. The CHORUS never quitting the stage, necessarily, introduced the *unity of place*; and as their *songs* and *dances* between the acts expressed the feelings excited by the representation, they connected the preceding act with that which immediately followed it, and rendered the whole spectacle uninterrupted and continuous.* The *music* of the

* Now it is well known to every man conversant in the Greek theatre, how the Chorus, which in fact is the parent of the drama, came in process of improvement to be woven into the fable, and from being at first the whole, grew in time to be only a part: the fable being simple, and the characters few, the striking part of the spectacle rested upon the singing and dancing of the interlude, if I may so call it, and to these the people who were too long accustomed and too warmly attached to allow any reform for their exclusion; the tragic poet therefore never got rid of his Chorus, though the writers of the Middle Comedy contrived to dismiss theirs, and probably their fable being of a more lively character, their scenes were better able to stand without the support of music and spectacle, than the mournful fable and more languid recitation of the tragedians. That the tragic authors laboured against the Chorus will appear from their efforts to expel Bacchus and his Satyrs from the stage, in which they were long time opposed by the audience, and at last by certain ingenious expedients, which were a kind of compromise with the public, effected their point: This in part was brought about by the introduction of a fuller scene and a more active fable; but the Chorus with its accompaniments kept its place, and the poet, who seldom ventured upon introducing more than three speakers on the scene at the same time, qualified the sterility of his business by giving to the Chorus a share of the dialogue;

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the CHORUS was more rich and various, and the *poetry* more elevated and glowing, than what could be admitted into the acts, or ordinary dialogue, which was confined to the *iambic* measure; * circumstances which, together with the numbers, the dresses, the dances, and gestures of these fancied spectators, equally increased the magnificence and variety of the entertainment.

who at the same time that they furnished the stage with numbers, were not counted amongst the speaking characters according to the rigour of the usage above-mentioned.

* *Iambics* were used in Tragedy, and were so called from the *Iambus*, of which they consisted, the first syllable of which was short, and the other long. These *Iambics* ran off with great rapidity, because the short syllable was always first.

Syllaba longa brevi subiecta, vocatur iambus,

Pes titus.

HOR. De Arte Poet.

"A long syllable immediately following, a short is called an *Iambus*, a *rapid foot*." Although *Iambics* consist of six feet, yet such is their rapidity, that they have been called *Trimeters*, or Verses of three feet, because, in scanning of them, we join two feet together.

Unde etiam trimetris acceffere iussit

Nomen Iambeis.

HOR. De Arte Poet.

"Whence *Iambics* have obtained the name of *Trimeters*."

The Poets, finding pure *Iambics* were too rapid, and, for that reason, not so well suited to the solemn majesty of Tragedy, introduced and mixed, with them, *Spondees*; which, by their length or slowness, might correct the precipitancy and rapidity of the *Iambics*. Since that time, the *Iambus* admits of the *Spondee* in the first, the third, and the fifth foot, and retains the old *Iambic measure* in the second, the fourth, and the sixth foot of the *tragick* verses. By this means the verses are now more noble and solemn, though the measure of *Trimeters* still continues, the second foot being ever an *Iambus*. The *comick* Poets invert this order, and place the *Spondee* where the *tragick* Poets have the *Iambus*. HORACE, in his *Art of Poetry*, takes notice that *comedy*, as well as *tragedy*, is adapted to these *Iambics*, as they are fitter for *alternate* discourse, &c.

Archilocum

entertainment. They likewise rendered it more affecting; since nothing is more proper to interest us in any scene, than the beholding a great number of persons deeply engaged by it, and expressing their feelings by natural tones and movements. But the principal advantage of the CHORUS was to furnish the poet with an opportunity (without loading the dialogue and rendering it too sententious) of enforcing, by all the powers of fancy and of numbers, that moral instruction,* which was occasionally attempted by

ÆSCHYLUS

*Archilocus proprio rabies armavit iambo,
Hunc socci cepere pedem grandesque cothurni,
Alternis aptum sermonibus, & populares
Vicentem strepitus, & natum rebus agendis,*

HOR. Ars Poetica,

" Archilocus, with fierce resentment warm'd,
" Was with his own severe *Iambics* arm'd,
" Whose rapid numbers, suited to the stage,
" In comic humour, or in tragic rage,
" With sweet variety were found to please,
" And taught the dialogue to flow with ease;
" Their numerous cadence was for action fit,
" And form'd to quell the clamours of the pit."

FRANCIS.

* HORACE, in his Art of Poetry, gives us the following rules for the CHORUS.

*Affaris partes chorus, officiumque virile
Defendat: neu quid medios intercinat actus,
Quod non proposito conducat & hæreat aptè,
Ille bonis faueatque & consiliatur amicè,
Et regat iratos, & amet peccare timentes:
Ille dapnes laudet mensæ brevis; ille salubrem
Iustitiam, legesque, & operis otia portis:
Ille tegat commissâ, Deosque precetur, & oret,
Ut redeat miseris, abeat fortuna superbis.*

HOR. Ars Poetica.

" The Chorus must support an actor's part;
Defend the virtuous, and advise with art;

Govern

ÆSCHYLUS and* SOPHOCLES, but which forms the continual end and aim of EURIPIDES, who had a soul to feel, and a genius to express whatever is most lovely, and most excellent in sentiment† and character. It is unnecessary to mention the affecting delicacy of *Admetus* and his attendants towards his guest *Hercules*; the lively emotions of gratitude in that hero; the friendship of *Pylades* and *Orestes*; the amiable picture of conjugal affection in the character of *Alceſtis*; ſince the whole remains of that inestimable writer prove his unceasing labours to warm his countrymen with all the virtues and charities that adorn private life, as well as to keep alive an ardent love of the republic, and a generous passion for its glory and liberty; while, in several passages he describes and refutes the philosophy of *Epicurus*, (which was chiefly borrowed from the licentious maxims of the Sophists) with such fulness and accuracy as entitles him to the appellation of the *philosophic tragedian*.

“That

Govern the choleric, the proud appease,
And the short feasts of frugal tables praise;
Applaud the justice of well-govern'd States,
And peace triumphant with her open gates;
Intrusted secrets let them ne'er betray,
But to the righteous gods with ardour pray,
That fortune with returning smiles may bless
Afflicted worth, and impious pride depress.”—FRANCIS.

* In a fragment of one of whose tragedies, *Sophocles* thus asserts the UNITY of the SUPREME BEING.

“Of a truth there is *one*, and only *one* GOD, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and all which it contains.”

† EURIPIDES with great sublimity thus invokes the eternal godhead.

“THEE I invoke, THOU SELF-CREATED BEING, who
“framed all nature in thy ætherial mould, whom light and
“darkness, and the whole multitude of the starry train encircle in the eternal *chorus*.” See THE OBSERVER.

These

"That EURIPIDES, though ten years older than SOCRATES, owed the characteristic excellencies of his works to the conversation and friendship of that unrivalled moralist is universally acknowledged by antiquity; though the character and intentions both of the poet and philosopher were grossly misrepresented by some of their contemporaries."

It is very justly observed, by the author of a *Dissertation upon Theatres*, that "*dramatic compositions* have ever been esteemed among the greatest productions of human genius; and that the exhibition of them on the *public stage*, has, by some of the wisest and best men, in all ages, been countenanced as highly serviceable to the cause of virtue. Nothing is more true than that *example* is the strongest and most effectual manner of enforcing the precepts of wisdom; and that a just *theatrical representation* is the best picture of human nature: With this remarkable and peculiar advantage, that in this humanizing and instructive academy, the *young spectator may learn the manners of the world*, without running through its perils." The same writer observes, that "as pleasure is the pursuit of the greatest part of mankind, (and most justly so, while this pursuit is continued under the guidance of REASON) all well-regulated states have judged it proper, both in a *political* and a *moral* sense, to have some *public exhibitions*, for the entertainment of the people. And, indeed, *what entertainment*, what pleasure so rational, as that which is afforded by a well-written and

These sublime and just sentiments, of the omnipotent JEHOVAH, do honor, as well to the *drama*, in general, as to their respective authors, in particular; who, from the natural illuminations of their own uninformed minds, without the aid of a *written revelation*, could thus breathe forth such great, divine, and everlasting truths!

and a well-acted play; by which the mind may receive, at once, its fill of improvement and of delight?" So thought the wise and lettered sages of the most wise and learned nation the world ever knew, even the truly refined and perfectly polished Greeks; from whom the lordly Romans, and every polished nation in Europe, received and cultivated the dramatic art.*

When

* The ROMANS were strangers to all *stage exhibitions* until the 389th year of their city; when, being afflicted with a desolating pestilence, they wisely sent into the neighbouring state of *Hebruria*, or *Tuscany*, for a band of *Histriones* or *Stage-Players*, in order to charm, or frighten away the Plague. From these *Histriones*, the ROMANS became acquainted with the old, rude, extemporaneous, *Fescennine* verses of *Hebruria*, to which they afterwards gave the name of *Saturnian*; upon a supposition that such kind of verses had been in use in the *golden age*, during the reign of SATURN. The actors and repeaters of these clownish, farcastic, verses, or poems, played the parts of low buffoons, casting alternate, rude, jokes and rustic railleries at each other, in a kind of half-prose, doggrel, verses; too often accompanying the same with very obscene language and lascivious gestures. The whole exhibition was attended with dancing and the music of the flute, and sometimes of the harp, also. The ROMANS borrowing and adopting these rude farces from their *Tuscan* neighbours, exhibited them afterwards, at the festivals of their Deities, which ever were a strange mixture of devotion and debauchery. From the time of their first introduction in ROME in the 389th year of the city, the ROMANS, until the opening of the superb, *permanent Theatre* of POMPEY THE GREAT, constantly exhibited them upon an occasional, wooden stage. These *Fescennine*, or *Saturnian*, verses soon degenerated in the most atrocious, *personal*, libels, attacking, in the most scandalous and infamous manner, the first families and the most respectable characters in the *Roman republic*. This gross perversion of these *stage exhibitions*, at length, produced laws, with severe penalties, to restrain the very licentious public libellers. Those laws had an happy effect, in putting a stop to such disgraceful licentiousness, deterring the versifiers from proceeding thus to insult their magistrates and more worthy

When the *Romans* governed the world, all the great cities of their enormous empire were embellished with THEATRES for the exhibition of *stage plays*, and other public shews and purposes, for the amusement, entertainment and accommodation of the people. The city of ATHENS boasted of the most magnificent and celebrated THEATRE of all antiquity, where their tragedies and other dramatic performances were exhibited with most astonishing pomp and splendor: For we find them expending upon the decorations of one single *tragedy* of their celebrated favorite, tragic poet, SOPHOCLES, a sum little short of one hundred and forty thousand pounds of our money. The Greeks had also a very spacious and splendid theatre at EPHEBUS, which is mentioned even in the Acts of the Apostles; where we read that "the people rushed with one accord into the THEATRE.* Notwithstanding

worthy citizens, and tearing their *private characters* to pieces, on the *public stage*. A change in the *stage exhibitions* soon took place, and much for the better. *Farces* were now produced and publicly exhibited, under the name of *Satires*; which were, by no means, wholly destitute of wit and humour. The public *stage exhibitions*, were now more poetic, chaste, and refined; the music was improved, and nothing now appeared in the dances, of obscenity and the former gross, indecencies. These *Satires*, as they were called, from this time became the only *Ludi Scenici*, or public *stage exhibitions*, until after the first *Punic war*; when, in the 514th year of the city, *Andronicus*, the Greek, appeared, and produced the first proper and truly dramatic compositions; to which the people flocked, in throngs, heard them with admiration, and came from them delighted and enraptured. The year after, *Andronicus* produced his first play, at Rome, the famous poet *Ennius*, who was afterwards a very famous dramatic writer, was born, at *Rudiae* in *Calabria*. For a more satisfactory account of these matters, the reader is referred to the annexed dissertation.

* Besides the exhibitions of the drama, the THEATRES served them for holding their town-meetings, or assemblies of the people, in.

withstanding the THEATRES which the Apostles must have met with in all the great cities of the Heathen or Gentiles, where they preached the gospel, we do not find them reproving the frequenters of *those* THEATRES, or condemning the *tragedies* or *comedies* there exhibited; nor yet condemning one single actor: On the contrary, as I observed before, we find St. PAUL making quotations from their poets and *comic writers*, in justification of his own sentiments. The amiable, the virtuous, the exemplary *good man* and *devout Christian*, the celebrated Mr. ADDISON, surely entertained no bad opinion of the THEATRE; or that distinguished *patriot*, philanthropist, and *christian philosopher*, would never have written his *patriotic* and sentimental *Tragedy* of CATO, his *Comedy* of the *Haunted House*, and other dramatic compositions. Nor, if they had thought the STAGE a vehicle of vice and immorality, can we readily believe that the great, the sublime, the pious DOCTOR YOUNG, the *chaste* ROWE, and others, (men of morals the most pure, of manners most unimpeachable, and of piety the most exalted!) would have written *those plays* which are, every year, publicly exhibited on the THEATRES, in *England*. And one of the most learned and pious dignitaries of the *English church*, even the great Archbishop TILLOTSON gives his testimony, decidedly, in favor of *dramatic exhibitions*; for, speaking of *plays*, he observes, that "they might be so framed, and governed by such rules, as not only to be *innocently diverting*, but *instructive* and *useful*, to put some follies and vices out of countenance, which cannot perhaps be so decently reprov'd, nor so effectually expos'd and corrected any other way."

In confirmation of the truth of this great and good man's observation, I will now relate a well known fact, in the *Roman history*. POMPEIUS MAGNUS, or

POMPEY

POMPEY THE GREAT, after the many victories he had obtained, and the great conquests he had made, had, certainly, a good title to the esteem of the people of Rome; yet, that great man, by some error in his conduct, became very unpopular, and an object of general dislike to his countrymen; and, therefore, in the representation of an *old play*, when *Diphilus*, the actor, came to repeat these words, "*Nostra miseria, tu, es, Magnus.*" (You, MAGNUS, are our affliction) the audience immediately applied them to POMPEY; who at that time, was as well known by the name of MAGNUS, OR THE GREAT, as by the name of POMPEIUS, OR POMPEY; and that audience were so highly pleased with the satyrical application of those words, that, as CICERO relates, they made *Diphilus* repeat those words an hundred times over. An account of this incident was immediately carried to POMPEY; who, instead of resenting it as an injury, was so wise as to take it for a just reproof. He immediately examined his conduct, he altered his measures, by degrees, he regained the esteem of the people, and, thereby shewed that he neither feared the wit of the stage, nor injuriously felt its satire. This is an example worthy of a great man, and proper to be imitated by great men in all countries; for, as no man is infallible, the greatest may err, the most circumspect, one time or other, may be guilty of some piece of ridiculous behaviour: *Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit*: No man is wise at all times: *Humanum est errare*: It is the lot of human nature to err: and *Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus*: even the excellent HOMER is sometimes found nodding. In all free countries the STAGE has proved a successful monitor, to those great men who deserve reproof, and has afforded to them an opportunity to reform those errors and indiscretions, those follies, or those vices, which

F none

none of their friends would be free enough, or rather honest enough, to give them in private. And this story of POMPEY, as well as a *real knowledge of the Roman history*, must convict of supreme ignorance, or gross misrepresentation, the person who sent to ADAMS'S Chronicle of the 12th of this month, certain extracts from a British author of the *Occasional Papers*, as the author of those extracts: For, that author, as copied in Adams's paper, says "the Republic of Rome, before *Julius Cæsar*, stopt the building of a THEATRE; being fully convinced that *this diversion* would bring in foreign vice; that the old Roman virtue would be lost, and the spirits of the people emasculated. This wise nation made the function of players scandalous, seized their freedoms, and threw them out of privilege, and reputation."* Would not any one, from all this, suppose that the Romans would not permit plays to be acted in public, before the time of JULIUS CÆSAR, (who was born in the year of Rome 654, in the consulship of M. ANTONIUS and A. POSTHUMIUS ALBINUS) and that the profession

* It is true, indeed, that *Scipio Nasica*, whom, on an extraordinary occasion, the highly aristocratic *Roman Senate* solemnly pronounced to be the most worthy man in the republic, was a great enemy to the THEATRE, and vehemently opposed those diversions, which, as he said, and we shall see hereafter, when we treat of the *Greek Comedy*, had enervated, and helped to bring on the ruin of, the *Greeks*. Have we not a *Scipio Nasica* in this Commonwealth? I think I can discern one, now in high office; with this difference, however, that *our Scipio really loves THE PEOPLE*, and detests every aristocratical principle; whereas the other was an infamous *deceiver of the people*, at one time making them believe that he was actually their friend; but no sooner did a proper opportunity offer, than *Nasica* shewed he regarded nothing but the Senate, none but the nobles: The assassination of that great patriot, that excellent and honest man, that tried friend of the people, *Tiberius Gracchus*, was owing to this high-flying aristocrat.

profession of a player was so infamous that no person of character could, with propriety, associate with any of that order? Now, Sir, if what CÍCERO relates be true, that *Diphilus* was acting such a part, in an *old play*, at the time that POMPEY was in the zenith of his power and splendor, it seems to me to refute the insinuation of this fanatical writer of the *occasional papers*. CÍCERO, the greatest orator that Rome ever knew, who had been Consul (one of the sovereign magistrates) and was one of the most distinguished men in the empire, for learning, extraordinary abilities, and elevated dignities, was the intimate friend and companion of *ÆSOPUS*, the *tragedian*,* and of the

* In an epistle from CÍCERO to *Marcus Marius*, in which that great orator gives an account of the magnificent exhibitions at the opening of POMPEY'S THEATRE, (which was one of the most superb structures of ancient Rome, and so very spacious as to contain no less than 80,000 spectators,) CÍCERO observes, that some of the *old actors*, who had formerly distinguished themselves with great applause, but who had long retired, were now again introduced upon the *stage*; as in honour, it should seem, of the festival, "Among these was my old friend *ÆSOPUS*: but so different from what he once was, that the whole audience agreed he ought to be excused from *acting*, in future. The *poor, old man's* voice failed him, and he had not strength to go through with a speech, in which was the celebrated oath,

"If I deceive, be Jove's dread vengeance

"Hurl'd," &c.

And thus he speaks of the inimitable player ROSCIUS:

Quis nostrum, tam, animo agresti ac duro fuit, ut ROSCIUS morte nuper non commoveretur? qui cum esset senex mortuus, tamen propter excellentem artem ac venustatem, videbatur omnino mori non debuisse.—CÍCERO *pro ARCHIA Poeta*.

"Was there any of us so void of taste, and of so unfeeling a temper, as not to be affected lately with the death of ROSCIUS? For although he died in an advanced age, yet such was the excellence and inimitable beauty of his art, that we thought him

guage of warm and rapturous commendation. Besides, when we consider that *stage plays* made no inconsiderable part in their public devotions,* we can never believe that *they* were held in execration, or that those who acted them were detested, as being infamous persons.

The

CICERO, in another place thus rapturously speaks of that excellent COMEDIAN—*Videtisne quam nihil ab eo histrione, nisi perfectè, nihil nisi cum summa venustate fiat; nisi ita ut deceat; & uti omnes moveat ac delectet? Itaque hoc jam ditu est consecutus, ut in quo quisque artifectio excelleret, is in suo genere ROSCIUS diceretur.*

Cic. de Orat. lib. 1. page 159.

“Don’t you observe that every thing he does, is done in the most complete, the most graceful manner; that he does nothing but with the greatest propriety, and so as to move and delight every body. Hence it is (he has long attained to this distinction) that when a man excels in his own craft, he is called the ROSCIUS of his profession.”

GUTHRIE’S Translation, page 55.

HORACE calls him, in 1. *Epist.* lib. 2. *doctus Roscius*; by which he meant that *Roscius* was perfectly skilled in all the arts of pleasing, and gave a wonderful grace to all his motions and gestures. This excellent actor, also, wrote a very learned Treatise upon the *Eloquence of the Theatre*, and that might entitle him, also, to the epithet *doctus*, or learned.

CICERO practised, under him, *pronunciation* and *gesture*.

MACROBIUS, in his *Saturnalia*, lib 3, cap. 14, mentions the great intimacy and familiarity that subsisted between CICERO and those two great Players, ÆSOPUS and ROSCIUS. *Nullus ignorat* (saith Macrobius) *CICERONEM Roscio & Æsopo histrionibus tam familiariter usum, ut res rationesque eorum solertia tueretur, &c.*

* The learned Mr. Spence, author of *Polymetis*, observes that “The first kind of poetry that was followed with any kind of success among the Romans, was that for the *stage*. The Romans were a very religious people; and *stage plays*, in those times, made no inconsiderable part in their public devotions; it is hence, perhaps, that the greatest number of their oldest poets, of whom we have any remains, and indeed, almost all of them, are dramatic poets.”

The writer of the *occasional Papers* laments that "infamous endeavours are made to create in the minds of men an utter abhorrence of the society for the reformation of manners." Now, Sir, this self-created society are a body wholly unknown to the law of England—a society who have sat themselves up to reprove, and prosecute fornication in the one poor, helpless, sex, and to hunt down the miserable, unprotected, *Sisterhood* of the Strand, in LONDON; but, unfortunately for these hypocritic miscreants, it was discovered, not long after their institution and assumption of usurped power, that some of these pretended saints were rather too strongly addicted to the infernal vice of *Sodom*. Some of the canting, informing, Reformers were detected, and prosecuted for *sodomitical practices*; and that very justly brought the whole, dark, woman-hating society into general abhorrence. These audacious Reformers caused *general warrants* to be issued, to apprehend *all disorderly and lewd women*, in the streets of LONDON. Under pretence of executing one of those illegal warrants, some of their ruffians dared to assault, and imprison, a decent, modest, reputable woman, who happened to be passing the street, on her lawful business, in the evening. For this outrage, she brought her action of *assault and false imprisonment* against the ruffian who thus insulted her; the action was tried, before LORD MANSFIELD, at *Nisi prius*; and the female avenger recovered handsome damages against the brutal Reformer. At another time, a gang of their trading constables, armed with bludgeons, broke into the house of a Mrs. Lemon, who kept a reputable tavern in *Chancery Lane*, near *Temple Bar*, LONDON, dragged her out of her house, repeatedly saluting her with the manly and decent appellation of *bitch*; and would have carried her to prison, if her neighbours had not interfered, and undertaken

for her appearance, the next day, before one of their tyrannical Justices, named *Kynaston*. For this outrageous insult, Mrs. *Lemon* brought her action, before that bright ornament of the English bench, Lord CAMDEN, then Lord Chief Justice *Pratt*; who, at *Guildhall*, in the city of LONDON, wiped down this infamous and unwarrantable society with the asperity of just reproach; and recommended to the jury to give satisfactory damages to the much injured plaintiff, who, accordingly gave three hundred pounds sterling, damages, which she recovered, with her costs.*

So

* The author hereof hath lately looked into the 2d part of *Wilson's reports*, page 160. Easter term 3 Geo. III. 1763; where he finds the case of ALLEN and others at the suit of LEMON, in the court of common pleas: On a motion for a new trial, at Westminster-Hall, on account of excessive damages, the court unanimously refused a new trial. The Lord Chief Justice stated the case generally, and pointedly declared his dislike of these Reformers. He says, "I don't think the damages excessive in the present case; here are a number of persons, like a new sort of *Grand Jury*, who meet once or twice in a week, and take upon themselves to present, correct, reform, and commence prosecutions; a warrant is granted by *Kynaston*, a reforming justice, on the information of one *Tristram*, who is fled for an abominable crime. There was no account given, at the trial, of the matter of his information to *Kynaston*, who did not appear, though he was subpoenaed; the warrant is pocketed for five weeks; the defendants watch and wait till they can dodge a lewd woman into the out-rooms of this house, where she had not been five minutes, before the defendants entered with bludgeons, and seized upon the person of the plaintiff, and would have carried her to prison that night, if her neighbours had not then interposed, and undertaken that she should appear before justice *Kynaston* next morning; which she did; but the defendants never pursued their warrant, one step further. "I think" (the Court of) "*King's Bench* would grant an information against these persons for setting themselves up as a kind of *Grand Jury*. An informer is an odious character; and I now am glad of an opportunity of declaring my dislike towards these Reformers."

So much for this infamous, backsliding, society, which the blubbing fanatic writer of the *occasional papers*, so wofully laments the general abhorrence of.

The ancient Greeks, who were the inventors of the DRAMA, were, certainly, the first or greatest people the world ever saw, and like their inimitable language, were an honour to human nature. They consisted of several, free, confederated, republics; of all of which, for polite literature, elegant taste, and the greatest perfection in the more refined arts, the *Attic*, or *Athenian*, republic was the most eminently distinguished. In honour of these *Athenians*, even at this day, we say of a composition very classical, or sublime, that it partakes of the *true attic salt*; and of all the dramatic performances and compositions, those of the *Greeks* were, assuredly, the most sublime and magnificent. Their poets were held in the highest estimation; and, from that order, they often chose the governors of their provinces, the generals of their armies, and the guardians of their liberties; and, yet in the virtuous times of their republic, who were more jealous of their liberties than those *Athenians*. Who, than they, better knew that the freedom of the THEATRE, next to the freedom of the SENATE, was the best support of LIBERTY, against all the base arts of those wicked citizens who might attempt to sap and undermine its foundations.

It has been often said that "*the manners of a people depend, in a great measure, on their dramatic entertainments*," and we hear it also said that, "*from thence is the genius of a nation best learned*." If there be any truth in these observations, it is sufficient to inform us of how great importance it is to any nation, that these kind of diversions should be properly regulated. * "Great advantages may be derived from a

Stage

* The case of our present Theatrical Disputes, &c. Printed in London, 1743.

Stage under proper regulations; and, on the contrary, nothing can be of worse consequence, nothing can prove more fatal to the manners, or to the reputation of a great people, than their fondness for *theatrical diversions*, if they are ill managed, or perverted from the purity of their original design.* The history of the *Athenian Theatre*, the most celebrated of all antiquity, while it may entertain and instruct us, will fully demonstrate the truth of this assertion. The *Athenian Stage* was always under the direction of the magistrate, yet its freedom fell and rose in proportion to that of the government; so that, when the constitution of the *Athenian Republic* was in its full vigour, the *Stage of Athens* was in its highest glory; and as their liberties began to sink, as corruption overspread their manners, and as the *ATHENIANS* lost that fire and spirit, which set them at the head of the noblest nation in the universe, the *GREEKS*; so the life and beauty

* A well regulated Theatre, and no other, does the town of BOSTON wish for; and no one, who is well acquainted with the town, but must be convinced, that BOSTON can boast of many gentlemen of good moral character, who possess acknowledged literary abilities, and an elegant taste; who would never consent to the most distant pollution of the chaste eye, or to the wounding the tender ear of unsuspecting, female, innocence. A number (say five, or more,) censors, or superintendants, of the *Theatrical entertainments of the town*, may be, annually, chosen in town-meeting, from among the worthy fraternity of tradesmen, the respectable body of merchants, the learned sons of the law, and even from among the venerable, enlightened, and truly respectable ministers of the gospel, in this great town; who, although they have dedicated themselves to the service of the altar, yet know, that they are directed not to be *over righteous too much*—not to act the part of British Churls, to condemn every species of decent, gay, good humour (as “*there is a time to laugh*.”) nor to renounce all the innocent recreations of polished society, in which their profession constitutes them gentlemen.

beauty of their *dramatic performances* gave way; their decorations increased, and the expence of the THEATRE rose to its greatest height, when the performances thereof were of the least value. All the learned world are perfectly well informed as to the known division of the *dramatic, comic, history* of that state, into the *old, the middle, and the new, comedy*; a succinct and clear account of which, however, may afford pleasure and instruction to those who may not have had opportunities to study, or who may not have paid attention to, this part of *classical history*.

“ The *old comedy* began in the earliest times of the commonwealth; and, as long as it lasted, is said to have retained a strong relish of its rude beginning. While this subsisted, it was no unusual thing to point out particular persons, by name, to expose notorious acts of corruption, flagrant frauds, and vices of singular enormity; which was agreeable to the freedom of the *Athenian constitution*; for it kept all degrees of people in awe, not from the fear of punishment, but of shame; which cannot well fall upon the innocent. While the poets had this license, there needed nothing but wit to collect a large audience, desirous of seeing such great men exposed, upon the *stage*, as gave law, perhaps, in other places: and this desire, springing from what cause it may, always drew a thronged audience to the exhibitions of these comedies.* Our modern

* The most celebrated writers of the *Old Comedy*, were *Cratinus, Eupolis* and *Aristophanes*, eleven comedies of the latter of which are now extant; for which we are indebted, it seems, to the devout care of the Holy Father, *St. Chrysostom*, who could not sleep without this favourite, *prophane, bawdy*, comic, poet under his pillow. HORACE takes particular notice of these three, great, comic, poets, in his *Satires*.

*Eupolis, atque Cratinus, Aristophanesque poeta,
Atque alii, quorum comedia prisca virorum est,*

modern critics are unanimous in condemning the **ATHENIAN STAGE**, at this time, as guilty of unwarrantable licentiousness; and the story of "*the Buffoon*, **ARISTOPHANES**, having baited the divine **SOCRATES** to death,"* is generally adduced as an undeniable instance

*Si quis erat dignus describi, quod malus, aut fur,
Quod machus foret, aut sicarius aut alioque
Famosus; multa cum libertate notabant.*†

HOR. Sat. iv. Lib. 1.

† "The comic poets, in its earliest age,
"Who form'd the manners of the *Grecian* stage,
"Was there a villain, who might justly claim
"A better right of being damn'd to fame,
"Rake, cut-throat, thief, whatever was his crime,
"They freely stigmatiz'd the wretch in rhyme."

FRANCIS.

QUINTILIAN agrees with **HORACE**, that *Aristophanes*, *Eupolis* and *Cratinus* were the principal writers of the old comedy.

* In his celebrated Comedy, intitled *the CLOUDS*, *Aristophanes* poured fourth torrents of witty abuse and the most licentious ridicule upon *Socrates*, the most eminent of all the Greek Philosophers; even, upon that *Socrates* whom all succeeding ages have viewed with admiration, and with a veneration almost bordering upon idolatry. There were strong factions in **ATHENS**, and the zealous partizans, on one side, were eager to catch at any thing that might tend to blast the character, lessen the reputation, or weaken the consequence of any of their opponents. The enemies of this sublime philosopher, and of his friends, readily joined to support the malignant ridicule and rude attacks of a most licentious poet, upon this eminently-distinguished, great, man. The first year of bringing forward this very celebrated Comedy, *Alcibiades*, and the other friends of *Socrates*, drove the satirical author and his actors out of the Theatre; but the hardy, persevering, poet, probably secure of future support, in the succeeding year, brought forward his second edition of *the Clouds*; in which, according to old *Ben. Johnson* (as remarked by the apologist of *Aristophanes*, the learned, elegant, and indefatigable, author of *the Observer*, in his 76th Number) "he" (*Aristophanes*) "hoisted him up with a pulley, and made him play the philosopher in a basket; measure how far a flea could skip geometrically,

stance of *that licentiousness*; though, after all, the fact is far from being so clear.* ATHENS, like other free countries, was then split into factions, and ALCIBIADES was endeavouring to put himself at the head of the commonwealth; which the true patriots opposed, with

geometrically, by a just scale, and edify the people from the engine."

The great body of the spectators, who, generally, care not at whose expense they are diverted, were delighted, beyond measure, at this second edition of *the Clouds*; the Theatre shook with almost incessant, loud, bursts of laughter, and the impudent, though witty, poet was loaded with public honours and applause. The magnanimous philosopher, who was present, stood conspicuous, among the crowded spectators, unmoved at the base, illiberal, attack. The play was now become too popular to be stopped, and SOCRATES, that Prince of philosophers, saw and heard his person, and manner of public teaching, ridiculed, mimicked, and mocked, to his face, amidst the tumultuous plaudits and repeated thundering bursts of laughter of many of the envious, the unworthy, and the baser, citizens of ATHENS; but he stood unmoved, possessing his soul in patience! This brutal, cruel, and indecent, sport paved the way for the destruction of this excellent philosopher; whom the oracle of *Delphos* declared to be the wisest man living; of that magnanimous *Socrates*, who, some years after, was publicly condemned to drink the fatal Hemlock, and to be cut off, under the pretence of impiety and perverting the youth; who, with the sereneest countenance, drained the deadly cup, after having refused the assistance and advice of his friends to fly from the laws of his country and to save his life; and who, during the operation of the poison, as if nothing momentous had happened, to the last, calmly delivered out discourses, to his mourning audience, replete with wisdom and the most exalted maxims of virtue!

* The learned and elegant author of *The Observer*, in his lxxv, lxxvi, and lxxvii numbers, represents ARISTOPHANES as one of the very first of comic poets, and as universally esteemed to be the standard of attic writing, in its greatest purity; and he endeavours to defend his ridiculing SOCRATES, in his famous comedy of *The Clouds*.

with great propriety. SOCRATES was Tutor to AL-
CIBIADES, and had taken some pains to shew him that
the vulgar (heathen) religion was all a cheat, and that
nothing could be more ridiculous than the Pagan sys-
tem of divinity. ALCIBIADES, like a rash, hot-head-
ed, young man, to shew how thoroughly he had im-
bibed the principles of his preceptor, demolished the
statutes of the *Athenian gods*, that stood in their cross
streets; which occasioned a great noise, disturbance,
and no small mischief, in the city. This preposter-
ous mode of free thinking, and contemptuous af-
front to the established religion of their country, on a
presumption of their own superiour sense and under-
standing, is what, among other things, ARISTOPHA-
NES exposes in his comedy entitled THE CLOUDS;*

by

* The *Clouds* is a satirical and personal comedy, the moral
of which is to shew how the sophistry of the schools may be
employed as an instrument of fraud and evasion in matters of
right and property; this is its principal object: But it touches
also upon other points by the way, and humourously exposes
certain new and chimerical notions about the relation of chil-
dren to their parents, and of the influence of *The Clouds*, as
superior to the superintending power of Jupiter.

Of its moral, therefore, separately considered (comprehend-
ing the chief duties and relations of men, whether to the gods,
to their parents or to society at large) there can be no doubt;
its excellence and importance speak for themselves.

The comedy being written before the practice was restrain-
ed of bringing living characters on the stage, a school is here
introduced, and the greatest philosopher of the time is repre-
sented in person on the stage: This philosopher is *Socrates*
himself, and the school is the school of *Socrates*.

Socrates is made to advance the hypothesis of *The Clouds*
before mentioned; but it should be constantly kept in remem-
brance, that he lays down no doctrines, as principles to
pervert his instructions to the evil purpose of defrauding and
eluding their creditors: The like remark holds good in the
case of the natural duty of children, to their parents: The son in
the

by which, *there is no doubt*, he meant to bring SOCRATES, ALCIBIADES, and all their party, into general odium with the people, and in which, it is true, he but too fatally succeeded. It was however, many (between seventeen and eighteen) years after, that SOCRATES was put to death, upon a prosecution of *impiety* and of *corrupting the youth*;* for which, nevertheless, it is very probable, the people were prepared by the ridicule thrown out in public, upon the THEATRE, against that PRINCE OF PHILOSOPHERS, by ARISTOPHANES, in this *comedy* of the CLOUDS.† Although this be true, yet ARISTOPHANES was not the instigator of the prosecution against SOCRATES, nor had he any immediate hand in the death of that admirable

the play, it is true, strikes and beats his father, on the stage, and he quotes the maxims of *Socrates* in justification; but he does not quote them as positive rules and injunctions for an act so atrocious; he only shews that sophistry may be turned to defend that, or any other thing equally violent and outrageous.

* “*The Clouds* was acted at least eighteen years before the death of *Socrates*: It was in the first year of Olymp. lxxxix. when *Isarchus* was *Archon*, that *Aristophanes* acted his first comedy of *The Clouds*, which was driven off the stage by *Alcibiades* and his party: In the year immediately following, when *Aminias* was *Archon*, he brought out the second of that name, which is the comedy in question, now in our hands: These are authentic records; take the earliest date of the death of *Socrates*, and it will not fall till the first year of Olymp. xcvi. when *Laches* was *Archon*; the interval is as I state it.”

The Observer, No. LXXVI.

† This comedy is thought, by some, to be one of the wittiest productions that ever came from the pen of man. And the author of *The Observer* remarks, that “*Ælian* confesses that the attack was successful beyond example; that the comedy, was applauded to the skies; never did any poet receive such honors from the public, as *Aristophanes*, for this play of *The Clouds*.”

ble philosopher ; * for it is well known that his accusers and prosecutors were *Anytus*, *Melitus* and *Lycon*.

But to return to the *old comedy*, it was certainly irregular, though full of life and spirit, conducive to the amendment of the morals, but, withal, a little too much tinged with scurrility ; as it attacked particular persons, by name, and pointed them out to public censure : In this, that species of comedy was as scurrilous

as

* The accusers of *Socrates* were *Anytus*, a man of great wealth, *Melites* or *Melitus*, a Poet, and *Lycon*, an orator ; all of whom were in the opposite faction to *Socrates*, *Alcibiades*, and their party ; but all these three wretches, afterwards, met with that fate they so justly merited, for their wicked persecution and destruction of this Prince of philosophers. Soon after the death of *Socrates*, the *Athenians*, convinced of the innocence and of the excellence of character of this extraordinary philosopher, repented of their rashness, in condemning to death this great luminary of the Heathen world ; to atone for which, in some measure, they put to death these execrable wretches, who had so basely accused, and brought to destruction, this honour of *Greece*, this glory of the *Attic* commonwealth ; whose excellencies, *while living*, however, his countrymen did not sufficiently estimate and admire. Nothing can be more just than the remark of *Horace* ; that

—*Qui pręgravat artes,
Infra se positas, extinctus, amabitur idem.*

HOR. *Epist.* 1. *Lib.* 2.

“ For he, who soars to an unwanted height,
Oppressive dazzles, with excess of light
The arts beneath him ; yet when dead, shall prove
An object worthy of esteem and love.” — FRANCIS.
And again :

*Virtutem incolumem odimus,
Sublatam ex oculis quęrimus invidi.*

HOR. *Carmen* XXIV. *Lib.* III.

“ Though living virtue we despise,
We follow her, when dead, with envious eyes.”

FRANCIS.

as our newspapers were, not long since. It is supposed that, for this reason, the *Athenian poets* were generally *players* also, and acted a capital part in their own dramatic compositions; for the profession of an actor was ever honourable in ancient Greece.* But when the consequence of the people began to decay, and some rich nobility grew to such an height of power as not to endure the freedoms exercised by the writers of comedy; a man might sometimes suffer very severely for the free exercise of his wit; as it has been said; actually, happened to the comic poet *Eupolis*, who was thrown into the sea, as it is pretended, by some persons whom he had exposed in a comedy, intitled

Baptis

* He was too sensitive in his nature to undertake the performance of his own parts in person, which was general with all the comic poets of his time; and he stood their railery for not venturing to tread the stage as they did. Amipias and Aristonymus, both rival authors, charged him with availing himself of the talents of other people from consciousness of his own insufficiency: Their railery could not draw him out, till his favourite actor *Callistratus* declined undertaking the part of *Cleon* in his personal comedy of *The Knights*, dreading the resentment of that powerful *dæmagogue*, who was as unforgiving as he was imperious: In this dilemma, *Aristophanes* conquered his repugnance, and determined upon presenting himself on the stage, for the first time in his life. He dressed himself in the character of this formidable tribune; and having covered his face with vermillion up to the hue of the brutal person he was to resemble, he entered on the part in such a stile of energy, and with such natural expression, that the effect was irresistible; and the proud factious *Cleon* was stript of his popularity, and sentenced in a fine of five talents, by the knight's decree, as damages for the charge he had preferred against the author, touching his right of citizenship, which was awarded and secured to him by the same instrument.

The Observer, Vol. 3, No. LXXV.

Baptæ; though *CICERO* treats that story as fabulous.* A law was made, however, which is taken notice of by *Horace*, in his *Art of Poetry*, and which forbade the writers of comedy to point out any man by name.†
The

* Some ancient authors have asserted that *Eupolis* perished in a naval engagement, which happened between the *Athenians* and *Lacedemonians*, near the *Hellepont*. *The Observer* remarks that "the prevailing account of his death is, that the persons, whom he had satirized in this play of the *Baptæ*, suborned certain assassins to throw him into the sea, as he was passing the *Hellepont* with the *Athenian* forces, then on an expedition against the *Lacedemonians*; and several authorities impute this revengeful deed to *Alcibiades*, who had been severely handled in that piece; but *Cicero*, in his first Epistle of the sixth book to *Atticus*, speaks of this report as a vulgar error, and quotes *Eratosthenes* for the fact of *Eupolis* having written certain comedies after the time, when the event of his death is dated; "*redarguit Eratosthenes; assert, enim quas ille post id tempus fabulas docuerit.*"

"*Pausanias* tells us, that his tomb was erected upon the banks of the *Æsopus*, in *Sicyonia*, and it is not likely this honour should be paid to his memory by the *Sicyonians*, he being an *Athenian* born, unless he had died in their country; the authority of *Pausanias* seems to confirm the account of *Eratosthenes*, and discredit the fable of his being thrown into the *Hellepont*."
The Observer, No. LXXIV.

† *Successit vetus his comedia, non sine multâ
Laude: sed in vitium libertas excidit, ac vim.
Dignam lege regi: lex est accepta; chorusque
Turpiter obticuit, sublato jure nocendi.*

HOR: Ars poetica.

"And now the ancient comedy appear'd,
Nor without pleasure and applause was heard;
But soon its freedom rising to excess,
The laws were forc'd its boldness to suppress,
And, when no longer licens'd to defame,
It sunk to silence with contempt and shame."—*Francis*.

"When *Tragedy* had arrived at some degree of perfection, the poets began to cultivate *Comedy*, which before lay neglected.

H

ed.

The *freedom of the stage* was, however, still very great, and the Poets continued to render essential services to their country, by shewing every species of vice in the foulest and most ridiculous colours; and this is what is commonly called the *middle comedy*; * which was more regular

ed. But as they indulged themselves in the most excessive licentiousness, such as exposing the magistrates on the stage, by their names, or by masks painted like them, *Lamachus* made the first reformation among them, and *Alexander the Great*, a second. One gave birth to the *middle comedy*; the other to the *new*, in which the chorus was no longer allowed, *turpiter obtinuit*."—FRANCIS.

* "I am next to speak of that class of authors, who are generally stiled writers of the *middle comedy*."

"The spirit of a free people will discover itself in the productions of their stage; the comic drama being a professed representation of living manners, will paint these likenesses in stronger or in fainter colours, according to the degree of licence or restraint, which may prevail in different places, or in the same place, at different periods. We are now upon that particular æra in the Athenian constitution, when it began to feel such a degree of controul under the rising power of the Macedonian princes, as put a stop to the *personal* licentiousness of the comic poets: If we are to consider Athens only as the capital seat of genius, we must bewail this declension from her former state of freedom, which had produced so brilliant a period in the annals of her literature; but speak of her in a political sense, and it must be acknowledged that whatever restraints were put upon her liberty, and however humbling the disgraces were which she incurred, they could not well be more than she merited by her notorious abuse of public prosperity, and most ingrateful treatment of her best and most deserving citizens. When the thunder of oratory was silenced, the flashes of wit were no longer displayed; death stopped the impetuous tongue of *Demosthenes*, and the hand of power controuled the acrimonious muse of *Aristophanes*; obedient to the rein, the poet checked his career of *personality*, and composed his *Æoloscon* upon the plan of what we now denominate

regular and better adorned than the former, or the old comedy; for it has ever been found necessary to supply to the eye whatever is deficient to the ear, and to endeavour to please such as *see plays*, who are, generally, much more numerous than those who go to hear dramatic performances.* The great delight which

nominate the *middle comedy*. Cratinus also, though the bitterest of all the old writers, began to sweeten his gall, and, conforming to the necessity of the times, condescended to take up with the resource of parody, and wrote his *Ulysses* upon the same system of reform; no longer permitted to vent his satire upon living characters, he took post on the boldest ground, that was left for him to stand on, and opened his attack upon the dead by ridiculing the immortal *Odyssey* of Homer. The chorus was now withdrawn, and the poet no longer spoke his own sentiments or harangued his audience by proxy; parody is satire of so inferior a species, that if comedy did not very sensibly decline in its middle æra (which there is no reason to think was the case) it must have been upheld by a very strong exertion of talents, or by collateral resources of a better stamp than this, which we are speaking of. Some, who are ranked in the old class of comic writers, continued to compose for the stage, as we have already instanced; it may well be presumed that they at least drooped the wing, and flagged under the pressure of unexperienced restraints; but if I may form a conjecture of the comparative spirit and excellence of the *Middle Comedy* from the samples and fragments of those dramatists, who properly and exclusively belong to it, I find nothing which disposes me to suspect that it had in the least declined from the merit of the first writers, but on the contrary should conceive, that it advanced in perfection no less than it did in time by the revolution which took place."

The Observer, No. C.

* *Quod numero plures, virtute & honore minores,
Indocti*

Omnis ad incertos oculus, & gaudia vana.

HOR. Epist. 1. lib. 2.

"The little vulgar of the clamorous pit,
Though void of honour, virtue, sense, or wit,
— from wit and genius fly

To pageant shows, that charm the wandering eye."

FRANCIS.

which the people took in beholding these dramatic entertainments, made it, on the one hand, necessary to preserve them, and, on the other, suggested the means of making them subservient to the designs of great men. With this view PERICLES, who contrived the subversion of the free State of ATHENS, in order to introduce a kind of placid tyranny, which was not to be supported by extent of influence, nor by force of arms, began to adorn the city with fine buildings; in which he consumed the treasure of the allies, deposited with the *Athenians*, in trust for the common cause. He encouraged also a general and exquisite taste in all the fine arts; but was particularly attentive in providing for the decorations of the THEATRE; in hopes that, through politeness, the custom of *reflecting on the great* would be left off; which however, continued beyond his time. But PERICLES introduced a custom which proved, in the event, equally fatal to the true taste, and to the *liberties* of his country, by which it was ordained that, when *the seats of the THEATRE* were above a certain price, the public treasury should defray the expense of all the tickets for the *poor citizens*; which occasioned, in them, a total inattention to the immense expense that, afterwards, was, profusely, wasted upon the THEATRE. It is easy to conceive what would be the effect of such contrivances, and how the *stage*, by degrees, would be reduced to a mere *spectacle of show* and amusement, instead of an instructive entertainment, as originally designed and intended. The *Great*, now freed from the apprehensions of having their first attempts, towards *sovereignty*, exposed to the populace, by the comic poets, became, eventually, friends to, and cherished, that kind of entertainment, which, at first, was their aversion; they now openly countenanced that species of writing which, thus, more immediately

ately served their sinister purposes; and they discouraged, as *rude*, indecent, and unpolite, that bold and free satire which was the glory of the *old comedy*, the PALLADIUM of *Athenian liberty*, and the astonishment of posterity." To make the people some pretended amends for a loss of what was so agreeable to them, the CHORUS was improved, the number of the *dancers* increased, and new *ornaments* were daily added; yet, *apparently*, without any expense to the people, as *they* were misled to believe: for their entrance money into the *Theatre* was still paid for, from the public treasury; which, in fact, was the property of the State, in which every citizen had an interest; and yet, these *Athenians* (though the sharpest people of *Greece*) were content to be deluded into a belief that what thus paid for by *all*, out of the *public chest*, really cost *them* nothing. Such was the progress of the *new taste*, while any degree of freedom remained in ATHENS; but, in proportion as their freedom decayed, the outward pomp and tinsel splendor of *their THEATRE* increased.—As *public satire* became discountenanced, and at last utterly abolished, so the love of fable, of intrigue, of chit-chat, and what is known, among the moderns, by the appellation of *genteel comedy*, grew into fashion and general esteem; and it then became a maxim, that *comedy* was intended to represent, only, the occurrences of common life; which, however it might be an improvement of the *dramatic art*, in respect to its *regularity*, was certainly a degradation of *comedy* in another, and more ancient, point of view; as it thereby took from it that great *political use* which first recommended it to the state, in which the *people* enjoyed the ultimate right of deciding upon *comedies*; while, with respect to *tragedy*, the judgment of the established critics alone was final. Thus much may serve to give

give us a view of the *middle comedy* of the ATHENIANS. We proceed now to the last period of the *Athenian Stage*.

Shortly before, and at the time when, the *Macedonian power* had overwhelmed the *liberties* of GREECE, the ATHENIANS found it convenient, or rather *necessary*, to make greater alterations in their *dramatic performances*; and this brought in the *new comedy*, from which the *Romans* afterwards copied. But although this species of comedy was dressed out with all that wit and invention, for which the *Athenians* were so justly celebrated, and notwithstanding these pieces were enriched with so many excellent sentences, of which learned men have made collections, for the use and entertainment of posterity;† yet was it found necessary still to add *new ornaments* to those already but too expensive; whereby, as we are informed, from writers of the first credit, the ATHENIANS expended more to support their THEATRE, than they had expended in obtaining the sovereignty of GREECE. *Apollodorus*, a wise citizen and an honest patriot, endeavoured to apply a timely remedy to this increasing mischief, by attempting to procure a law, that in times of great public necessity, the funds established for the maintenance of these diversions, might be applied to the exigencies and services of the state; but he miscarried in this prudent and honest attempt, and, the people, on the motion of one *Eubulus*, were so infatuated as to pass a law that it should be a capital crime for

† "The celebrated names of *Menander*, *Philemon*, *Diphilus*, *Apollodorus*, and some few besides, are not wholly left without records, every fragment that bears their stamp has been accounted so venerable, that some of the greatest scholars of modern times have thought it an office of honour to be employed in the collection of them."

for any man in future to attempt the reviving of this project of *Apollodorus*. And this will account for many broken hints which we meet with in DEMOSTHENES who could not patiently bear to see his country in immediate danger of being enslaved for want of money, to supply the exigencies of the state, while such immense sums were misappropriated to mere ostentatious show and unnecessary amusement; and yet he was afraid to risk his life, by a motion, at once against the laws, and contrary to the humour of his degenerated countrymen. Thus we see the declining ATHENIANS prefer the preservation of an ostentatious THEATRE to the solid liberties and reputation of their country, and become as distinguished for their public shows, as their glorious ancestors were for their many signal and splendid virtues. And now we see in what sense *theatrical diversions* are said to have such an influence on the minds of the people, when and how they may contribute to excite a spirit of virtue, or to debilitate and debauch the minds of the audience; and thereby bring on the ruin of a state.*

The

* The learned author of the *Inquiry into the life and writings of HOMER*, observes, that "Nothing can be more opposite than the style, the language, the manners of *comedy* to *epic*. The fittest for the one seems the most improper for the other; and the most *uncomic character*, on earth, is that of a great and a generous man. It is indeed true, that in such a thorough democracy as *Athens* the limits of *comedy* and *tragedy* could not be well ascertained, or kept asunder. *Tragedy* being a representation of the *high* characters in life, and *Comedy* of the *lower*, they were, in reality, jumbled together in this state, where the vilest and meanest creature might speak as scurrilously of the person and conduct of the first citizens, as his education and temper could prompt him. Here lay the strength of the *old comedy*, which could not subsist but in such a state; and which no doubt must have the preference, if immoderate laughter, if liberty to talk at random, and banter the highest

The destruction of the Athenian liberties from the inordinate excess of the people to splendid show; and their extravagant eagerness for the more flimsy and empty entertainments of the THEATRE, is a very singular instance in history. No other nation, that I remember to have read of, have fallen by the same means; though it be true that it has been said of the Romans, in their decline, that the people fought after nothing but *bread and public shows*.^{*} But, I think there is very little danger that our hardy, northern, race will ever suffer from a like cause, had we ever so many THEATRES among us. "The Grecian commonwealths"

highest dignities, and best men of the nation, be advantageous to that kind of writing. But if that *liberty* was often abused, and if the *drama* is capable of a nobler turn, and of giving a more refined pleasure; if more *truth* can be brought into the manners, and *men* and their *natures* more generally represented, in that case it must give way to the *new*."

"I must however own, that while the high democracy prevailed at *Athens*, and the commonalty were possessed of that uncontrolled power which *Pericles* put in their hands, and *Cleon* exercised, during that time, *Aristophanes* and his fellows had *originals* to draw from; and in that respect their wit and writings, which appear to us *theatrical* and *false*, are natural and true. But that wild, licentious government was no sooner checked by fears from abroad (which always produce regulations at home) than the ΚΑΛΟΙ ΚΑΤΑΘΟΙ, the men of capacity, and worth, began to distinguish themselves and appear eminent; a *secrétion* was made; manners were formed and characters observed and valued. HERE was the rise of the *new comedy*; ribaldry was banished and *Menander* wrote. That is, at a season when *liberty* was not lost, but the excesses of it lopped off; when the humour of that witty people was not qualched, but regulated; so true it is "That every kind of writing, but especially the *poetic*, depends upon the manners of the age when it is produced." The best poets copy from *nature*, and give it us such as they find it.

^{*} *Panem et Circenses.*

“wealths” (says the admirable philosopher of Salisbury) “while they maintained their liberty, were the politest, the bravest, and the wisest of men. In the short space of little more than a century, they became such statesmen, warriors, orators, historians, physicians, poets, critics, painters, sculptors, architects, and (last of all) philosophers, that we can hardly help considering, *that golden period*, as a providential event in honour of human nature; to shew to what perfection the species might ascend.” And he fixes the “*effulgence of Grecian genius*,” from the time of the defeat of the Persian armies of Xerxes to the time of Alexander the Great; during which period the great, the striking, the sublime (call it as you please), attained to an height, to which it never could ascend in a future age.”* “The language of these Greeks,” he further observes, “was truly like themselves, ’twas conformable to their transcendent and universal genius. Where matter so unbounded, words followed of course, and those exquisite in every kind, as the ideas for which they stood. And hence it followed, that there was not a subject to be found, which could not, *with propriety*, be expressed in Greek. Here were words and numbers for the humour of an Aristophanes,† for the native elegance

* “The History of GREECE abounds with the most striking examples of profound wisdom, valour, and sound philosophy.”
GOLDSMITH.

† “The Comedies of ARISTOPHANES are universally esteemed to be the standard of *Attic writing*, in its greatest purity; if any man would wish to know the language, as it was spoken by PERICLES, he must seek it in the scenes of ARISTOPHANES, where he is not using a foreign or affected diction, for the purpose of accommodating it to some particular or extravagant character. The ancient authors, both Greek and Roman, who had all the productions of the *Athenian Stage* before

elegance of a **Philemon* or *Menander* (the comic poet quoted by *St. Paul*, in 1 *Corin.* xv. 33) "for the amorous strains of a *Mimnermus* or *Sappho*; for the rural lays of a *Theocritus* or *Bion*; and for the sublime conceptions of a *Sophocles* or *Homer*. The same in prose.

before them, speak of him with such rapture and admiration, as to give him a decided preference before all other comic poets, with an exception, as I believe, of *Plutarch* only, who brings him into comparison with *MENANDER*.

THE OBSERVER, No. LXXV.

* In the IVth vol. of THE OBSERVER, No. cxiii. a variety of passages are adduced, from the *Greek* poets, to shew how far natural religion had enlightened mankind before *Revelation took place*; among these are two from *PHILEMON*, the comic Poet. In a dialogue of this Poet the following is added:

"Tell me, I beseech you, what is your conception of GOD? As of a Being who seeing all things, is himself unseen."

I shall reserve myself (saith the author of THE OBSERVER) for one more extract, which I shall recommend to the reader as the finest, which can be instanced from any Heathen writer, exhibiting the most elevated conceptions of the being and superintendence of ONE, SUPREME, ALL-SEEING, ineffable GOD, and of the existence of a future state of rewards and punishments, by the just distribution of which, to the good and evil, all the seeming irregularities of moral justice, in this life, shall, hereafter, be set strait; and this, if I mistake not, is the summary of all that natural religion can attain to. The following is a close translation of this famous fragment.

"Thinkest thou, O *Niceratus*, that those departed spirits, who are satiated with the luxuries of life, shall escape as if from an oblivious GOD? The eye of justice is wakeful and all-seeing; and we may truly pronounce that there are two several roads conducting us to the grave; one proper to the just, the other to the unjust; for if just and unjust fare alike, and the grave shall cover both to all eternity—hence! get the hence at once! destroy, lay waste, defraud, confound at pleasure! But deceive not thyself; there is judgment after death, which GOD, the LORD OF ALL things, will exact, whole tremendous

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prose. Here *Isocrates* was enabled to display his art, in all the accuracy of periods, and the nice counterpoise of diction. Here *Demosthenes* found materials for that nervous composition, that manly force of unaffected eloquence, which rushed like a torrent, too impetuous to be withstood." In short, truly has this admirable philosopher said, of this super-excellent language, that "*the Greek tongue, from its propriety and universality, is made for all that is great, and all that is beautiful, in every subject, and under every form of writing.*"

"Graii ingenium, Graii dedit, ore rotundo,
Musa loqui."†

But

tremendous name is not to be uttered by my lips, and HE it is who limits the appointed date of the transgressor."

It is curious to discover *sentiments of this venerable sort* in a fragment of a *Greek comedy*; yet, certain it is that it has either *Philemon* or *Diphilus* for its author, both writers of the *new comedy*, and contemporaries. *Justin*, *Clemens*, and *Eusebius* have all quoted it, the former from *Philemon*, both the latter from *Diphilus*: *GROTIUS* and *Le Clerc* follow the authority of *Justin*, and insert it in their collection of *Philemon's* fragments; *Hertilius*, upon the joint authorities of *Clemens* and *Eusebius*, gives it to *Diphilus*, and publishes it in his valuable and rare remains of the *Greek comic writers*.

MENANDER says, that "GOD, THE LORD AND FATHER OF ALL THINGS, is alone worthy of our humble adoration, being at once, the Maker and the Giver of all blessings."—See *The Observer*.—What will the prejudiced, gloomy bigot now say against a *chaste comedy*, containing such exalted effusions of piety as the above?

† "To her lov'd Greeks the muse indulgent gave;
To her lov'd Greeks, with greatness to conceive,
And in sublimer tone their language raise."—FRANCIS,

QUINTILIAN advised, that a boy, among the *Romans*, should begin with the study of the "*Greek language*, because the *Latin* is so common that *we* are obliged to learn it: At the same time it is proper that his education should begin with
Greek

But those who would wish to gain the most full and satisfactory commendation of this glorious language in which was written the first *stage plays*, we have any account of, may turn to the HERMES of the admirable HARRIS, chap. v; where they will receive full satisfaction on this head. I am somewhat surpris'd that this amiable and very learned philosopher should have omitted to observe, that divine wisdom decreed that the glorious and everlasting gospel of the *New Testament* should be the first penned in this exalted language; a language, then, the most universal among all the polite and all the learned of the immense *Roman Empire*; as universal then, as the *French tongue* is now in all the polished circles of *Europe* and *America*; a language the most copious, the most energetic, the most expressive, and the most fixed and unchangeable with which *human nature* was ever honored; for we find no considerable change in this noblest of all languages for the full efflux of a thousand years, even from the days of HOMER to the time of PLUTARCH: and though the *Greek* was, by many centuries, older than the *Latin tongue*, yet did it exist, as a *living language*, for near eight hundred years after the *Latin* ceased to be the common language of *Rome*, which was sometime in the *seventh century* at farthest; whereas *Greek* was spoken, in tolerable purity, at *Constantinople*,

Greek studies, because from thence *our own learning* is derived." *Quin. lib. 1. cap. 1.*

HORACE, who was well versed in the *Greek*, and a warm admirer of the *Grecian* compositions, recommends, to his own countrymen, to study them, day and night.

*Vos exemplaria, Græcæ
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurnâ.*

Hor. Ars poetica.

"Make the *Greek* authors your supreme delight;
Read them by day, and study them by night."—FRANCIS.

people, quite down to the *fifteenth century* of the Christian æra; when that city was taken by the *Turks*, and its inhabitants dispersed over *Europe*; whereby their inimitable language, their poets, orators and historians were disseminated, as these conquered Greeks migrated, and now afford infinite instruction, delight, and entertainment, to the modern world. But, what do these *plays*, which originated in *Greece*, teach us?—They point out to us many of the most sublime virtues; they represent *wice* in all her blackest, her most heinous deformity; while they present *virtue* to us in her brightest beauty, her most amiable colours.* On the stage, we see the tyrants and oppressors of mankind exposed and gibbeted in effigy, there receiving the punishment they most justly merit. There we view the vicious ambitious man, traced through the labyrinth of all his doubling wiles; presenting to us the hidden scenes of all his villainies, which are there most clearly laid open and exposed; raising in every spectator a just horror of such detestable crimes. There, is seen the canting, crooked, hypocrite,

— * “No one will contend that the corrupt and abominable manners of the times in which *Aristophanes* wrote, did not fully warrant the severity of his satire, or that his characters of depravity are, in general, overcharged, and his pictures of human nature more deformed than their originals. As for the rest of the comic fraternity their fragments only can plead for them; but they are fragments of such a nature, as prove them to have been moralists of the sublimest sort, and they have been collected, translated, and applauded, by the greatest and most sententious of the *Christian writers*, for many ages. I will venture to say, that in the scattered reliques of the comic stage, more useful knowledge and good sense, better maxims for right conduct in life, and a more generous display of benevolence, justice, public spirit, and all the moral virtues of natural religion, are to be found, than in all the writings of the philosophers, which are so much more entire.”

THE OBSERVER.

hypocrite, who values himself upon his cunning† and duplicity, (equally false to God and *man*) whose face is harder than brass, whose soul is dark as *Erebus*, and whose heart is full of stratagems and spoils; even *there, upon the stage*, we behold this *detestable monster* stript, laid bare, and naked to the public eye; while abhorrent aversion is excited in every honest breast, as the scenes unfold, and the abominable wretch is traced through all his base intricacies, hell-born villainies, and unhallowed impurities. There, the follies of different countries, nations, kingdoms, and states, of differing manners, laws, dress, and customs, are openly exposed, and ridiculed, in so clear a light, that the guilty may behold themselves as in a mirror and reform, if they are not quite callous; and lost to all sense of feeling and of shame. *There*, not only treachery, inhumanity,* pride, lust, avarice, revenge, with

† "The dark and crooked paths of *Cunning* are unsearchable and inconceivable to an honourable and elevated mind."

Dr. GREGORY.

* "Epicharmus, in one of his comedies (we may suppose *The Statesman*) introduces the following retort from some man of low birth to a prating old woman, who is vapouring about her ancestry."

"Good gossip, if you love me, prate no more:

What are your genealogies to me?

Away to those, who have more need of them!

Let the degenerate wretches, if they can,

Dig up dead honour from their father's tombs,

And boast it for their own—Vain, empty boast!

When every common fellow, that they meet,

If accident hath not cut off the scroll,

Can shew a list of ancestry as long.

You call the Scythians barbarous, and despise them;

Yet Anacharsis was a Scythian born;

And every man of a like noble nature,

Tho' he were moulded from an Æthiop's loins,

Is nobler than your pedigrees can make him."

The Observer, No. LXXIII.

all the exorbitant passions, licentious fallies, ridiculous whims, and enormous brutalities of corrupt nature are exposed, examined, judged, and condemned; but the most refined principles of humanity, honour, worth, probity, benevolence, friendship, clemency, and compassion, with all the other amiable virtues, are inculcated, with all the powers of oratory and of action, and with such irresistible force and energy, that even the most stupid may see and admire the excellent and amiable beauties of the one, and learn to detest and abhor the shocking deformities of the other.

Besides serving the general cause of virtue and morality, the stage might prove the means, if not of improving our language, at least of mending our pronunciation; for, from a *well-regulated* THEATRE, we should, in all probability, be soon cured of those horrid barbarisms, which now so frequently "grate harsh thunder" on a well-tuned ear; by which some of us destroy all true orthography and *right quantity*, and overthrow the rules of *prosody*. The pulpit, the bar, and the senate might then, haply, unlearn the horrid vicious modes, with which but too many of them now continually disgrace themselves, when they so wrongfully pronounce *active*, *accusative*, *attentive*, *adverbs certain*, *destructive*, *envy*, *genitive*, *instructive*, *legislature*, *melancholy*, *miracle*, *nominative*, *persuasive*, *provides*, *representative*, *resolves*, *satire*, *veal*, *vinegar*, *white*, *wine*, with almost numberless other words; which, by the most vulgar and miserably-vicious pronunciation, are but too often tortured and perverted into *active*, *accusative*, *attentive*, *adverbs*, *certain destructive*, *envy*, *genitive*, *instructive*, *legislature*, *malancholy*, *marracle resolves*, *satyre*, *weal*, *winegar*, *vite*, *vine*, &c.

Speaking of verbal quantity in the Greek and Latin languages, the admirable HARRIS, in his *Philological Inquiries*,

Inquiries, observes, that "while those two languages were in purity, their *verbal quantity* was in purity also. Every *syllable* had a measure of *time*, either long or short, defined with precision, either by its *constituent vowel*, or by the *relation* of that vowel to other letters adjoining. SYLLABLES thus characterized, when, combined, made a verse; so that, while a *particular harmony* existed in every part, a *general harmony* was diffused through the whole."

"PRONUNCIATION at this period being, like other things, perfect, ACCENT and QUANTITY were accurately distinguished."

"Language" (says an author, I do not recollect who, but believe *Doctor SAMUEL JOHNSON*) "is the dress of thought; and as the noblest mien or most graceful action, would be degraded and obscured by a garb appropriated to the gross employments of *rustics*, so the most heroic sentiments will lose their efficacy, and the most splendid ideas drop their magnificence, if they are conveyed by words used commonly upon low and trivial occasions, debased by vulgar mouths, and contaminated by inelegant applications"—And, with great truth, he might have added, by a corrupt and vicious mode of pronunciation.

"What, (says *CICERO**) in the retirements of private life, can give more delight, or more properly belong to civilized humanity, than pleasant and polished discourse, free from all marks of rusticity? For in this alone, consists our chief pre-eminence over the brute beasts, that we can converse together, and, by speech, express the sentiments of our minds."

Besides rectifying our, at present, too generally vicious pronunciation, some of our clergy, would have an opportunity afforded to them, from whence they

* *CICERO de Oratore.*

they might catch the fire of animation, and learn some proper action and gesture, should a well regulated THEATRE be erected among us.

"Elocution is a graceful management of the voice, the countenance, and the gesture, and is to be acquired, like every other thing, or all the other arts, by precept, by example, and by practice."* It is well known that the Greeks taught their children their super-excellent language, with the most attentive care, and instructed them in all the arts of oratory, with the most diligent attention, even from their earliest years. They inculcated a scrupulous attention to quantity, accent, emphasis, and cadence, in the tones of their voices, as well as a minute circumspection to the proper gestures, and action of their limbs, their eyes, and the whole body; and, from their very tender years, the Romans taught their children to read their poets, in order to form accurately, their imperfect accents, to acquire the knowledge of true quantity, and to pronounce their words with the utmost exactness and propriety; as well as to give them pure ideas, and to raise in their young minds an aversion to low and filthy discourse.†

SHERIDAN, in his treatise upon British education, speaking of the venerable order of the clergy, remarks that

* CICERO.

† *Os tenerum paeri balbumque poeta figurat.*

HOR. *Epist. 1. lib. 2.*

"He forms the infant's tongue to former sounds."

FRANCIS.

The accurate QUINTILIAN, in order to the forming of an Orator, insists that as soon as a man becomes a father, he ought to employ the most diligent attention to the education of the future Orator. He even directs that the nurses of children should be free from all impediment, and impropriety, of speech.

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"Chrysippus

that "no order ever produced such numbers of men distinguished for knowledge and wisdom, remarkable for purity of morals, and sanctity of life; that their discourses in the cause of virtue and religion, are the noblest productions that ever came from the wit of man; that, in the education of these great men, great care was taken to instruct them in *philosophy*, and to store their minds with all sorts of knowledge; but that no care at all was ever taken to instruct them in oratory, or the art of communicating what they knew to others, by speech; that so far from training them in the study and practice of ORATORY, their very first principles of speaking were corrupted by the most ignorant teachers; and that this error was never afterwards amended; that

"*Chrysippus* wished every nurse to be a woman of sense; but at all events, he was of opinion, the best that could be had should be pitched upon, according to the circumstances of the parties. It is true, their morals ought to be the first consideration, but it is requisite that they should speak with propriety. Their speech is the first thing the child hears, and he liks out an imitation of their words. By nature, we are very susceptible of what we imbibe in the dawn of life, in the same manner as new vessels retain the flavour which they first drink in. There is no recovering wool to its native whiteness after it is dyed. Now the more vicious a habit is, the closer it will stick; for good habits are easily changed into bad ones: But where did you know a vicious habit become a good one? Even a child, therefore, ought to be used to nothing in his infancy, which he must afterwards be at pains to unlearn." And he recommends the same thing as to the play-fellows, and the companions of young gentlemen, as he does concerning nurses. In the third chapter of his third book, he divides "the whole system of speaking into five parts; *invention, disposition, elocution, memory and delivery*, or, which is the same thing, *action*; the first four of which, (he observes) however, may be vitiated, nay, utterly lost upon the hearer, by a pronunciation that is disagreeable, either in the sound, or in the action."

in consequence of this, they delivered *the words of TRUTH in the tones of FICTION*, and were so far from *delighting*, that they *disgusted* their hearers." And, he might have, very justly, added; but let us go into some of *our churches* (and, *we, in this country*, may say, into some of *our congregations*) on a warm summer's day, and *there* we may hear and see how the dismal, dull, drawling, drowsy monotony of the droning pastor, like a stupifying opiate, lulls, even into a deep, profound, sleep, the benumbed senses of his unawakened, Sabbath, flock. And, indeed, according to the author last mentioned, "*without the power of speaking, and skill in oratory*, the pulpit is, at best, useless, and the preacher a cypher. We might as *reasonably expect that red coats and muskets, without ammunition or military discipline* in soldiers, should preserve our country against the invasion of an enemy, as that *black gowns and bands, and empty forms*, or the

"Shooting calm words, folded up in smoke," should be sufficient weapons, in the hands of the CLERGY, to support the church against the attacks of vice and infidelity."

"There are *two ways* by which *the purity of religion*, and its precepts may be *enforced* and defended; by *speaking* and by *writing*. The first is the immediate gift of God, who has annexed to it (when cultivated by man) powers almost miraculous, and an energy, almost divine. He has given to it *tones* to charm the ear, and to penetrate the heart: He has joined to it *action* and *looks*, to move the inmost soul. By that, attention is kept up without pain, and conviction is carried to the mind with delight; persuasion is ever its attendant; and the passions own it for a master. Great as is the force of its powers, so unbounded is their extent, that all mankind are capable

capable of its impressions, the ignorant as well as the wise, the illiterate as well as the learned. The second" (*writing*), "is the invention of man, a mere work of art; and therefore can contain no natural power. Its use is to give stability to sound, and permanence to thought, to preserve words that otherwise might perish as they are spoke, and to arrest ideas that might vanish as they rise in the mind; to assist the memory in treasuring these up, and to convey knowledge at a distance, through the eye when it could find no entrance by the ear. The vast superiority of the former over the latter is obvious enough from this view. There is no power belonging to the latter which the former, wherever its influence can be exerted, does not possess in a more eminent degree. Whereas, there are many powers belonging to the former, in which the latter has no share, THAT works by the whole artificial, as well as by natural means; THIS by artificial means only. None but the learned can receive benefit from the one; all mankind from the other. As the bulk of the people" (in England) "are illiterate, its public utility, therefore, must be much greater. The one should be considered as an hand-maid to the other, and employed chiefly in such offices as she cannot do in her own person."—In the case of the miraculous gift of tongues, "the mere utterance of the sounds whereof their language was composed, could have but little effect, except the wonder it might occasion, how illiterate men should be able to acquire that art; but when each found himself addressed, not only in the words but in the spirit of their several languages; their expressions enforced by proper tones and cadence; and the whole delivered with such energy as could penetrate the heart, they, at once, saw and felt that this could be only the work of God; nor could such multitudes of converts have been made

in one day, by any other means. In what sort of *sounds*, with what kind of *gestures* must St. PAUL have spoken when FELIX (the Roman Governour,) "trembled? With what powers of *oratory* must he have addressed the ATHENIANS, when that polished people looked upon him with such admiration? and what must have been the force of his *eloquence* when the men of *Lystra* called him *Mercury*, and would have paid him *divine honours*? And, indeed, when the amazing strength and almost boundless *power of oratory* is considered, no other instrument could be found of sufficient force and suitable dignity, to support the important and glorious cause of religion."

"If CICERO, in pleading the cause of a criminal could make the blood forsake the cheeks of CÆSAR and unnerve his arms; why might not the greatest and mightiest among us be made to tremble, like FELIX, could our *Preachers*, like St. Paul, reason, with force and energy, upon righteousness and judgment to come! There can be no doubt, but that an *equal degree of skill in that art* would have much nobler effects among us, and be possessed of a much more extensive power than among the ancients, as its subject would be so much more important and the field in which it should display itself so much more enlarged. It must also have a greater command over the passions, as the object of our hopes and fears is increased. Whoever doubts of the truth of this, may soon be convinced, by examining into the wonderful effects which have been produced by the wild, uncultivated oratory of our methodist preachers."

Whitefield, Sir, if I have been rightly informed, was originally, a *Stage player*; he carried the *oratory and the action* of the THEATRE into the PULPIT, and from the *tones of his voice*, assisted by *gestures* and action, (although

though his eye was against him), he captivated and carried away the multitude!

To assist the *vicious pronunciation* of some *few*, at least, of our *Clergymen*, to instruct them in a more proper mode of elocution than such *few*, at present, are conversant in, and to teach them *some kind of proper action*, a THEATRE, under *proper regulations*, established among us, would prove of very great use, in my humble opinion, and, thereby, greatly aid the *cause of religion*, in this country; for "without knowledge, eloquence would be but an empty sound; without eloquence, knowledge can never be shewn in its true light:" and, "he is the best orator" (according to CICERO) "who, by the powers of elocution, at once instructs and delights, and at the same time, by affecting the passions, moves his auditory."

The wisest and best of men, of old, attended and encouraged *theatrical exhibitions*. The wise law-giver of ATHENS, the virtuous SOLON, frequented *plays*, even in his declining years; and, if we can credit *Plutarch*, he thought *plays* useful to polish the manners of the people, and to instil the principles of virtue.* We also find

* "As an Orator, SOLON stands high in point of merit, and first in order of time: As a poet, his genius was sublime, various, and fluent; in subjects of fiction and fancy he never dealt; but though he chose his topics with the gravity of a statesman, and handled them with the fidelity of an historian, he composed with ardour, and never failed to fire his hearers with the recitation of his poems: He is *supposed* to have reprobated the drama, but, *if this be a fact*, we may well conclude that it was the old corrupt masque of Bacchus and the Satyrs, of which he signified his dislike, and in this he is warranted."

The Observer, No. XVIII.

"*Thespis* had more than once seen in the festivals, in which, as yet, hymns only were sung, one of the singers, mounted on a table, form a kind of dialogue with the chorus. From this hint he conceived the idea of introducing into his tragedies

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find even the divine SOCRATES, as has been shewn, assisting EURIPIDES in his *theatrical compositions*. When the arts and sciences, learning, eloquence, and poetry, flourished in ROME, we also find the accomplished LÆLIUS improving his social hours with TERENCE, the comic poet; and even the great SCIPIO, thinking it no disgrace to be one in so agreeable a party.* The mighty JULIUS, who was an excellent historian, orator, and poet, as well as the first general of his day, thought the title of *poet* no small addition to his honor; and ever mentioned those eminent comic poets, MENANDER and TERENCE, with the greatest

an actor, who by simple recitals, introduced at intervals, should give relief to the chorus, divide the action, and render it more interesting. This happy innovation, together with some other liberties in which he had allowed himself, gave alarm to the legislator of Athens, who was more able than any other person to discern the value or danger of the novelty. SOLON condemned a species of composition in which the ancient traditions were disguised by fictions; "if we applaud falsehood in our public exhibitions," said he to Theſpis, "we shall soon find that it will insinuate itself into our most sacred engagements."

"The excessive approbation and delight with which both the city and country received the pieces of *Theſpis* and *Susarion*, at once justified and rendered useless the suspicious fore-sight of SOLON.——Travels of *Anacharsis the younger*, by the Abbe BARTHELEMI, vol. 6. c. LXIX.

* The great SCIPIO ÆMILIANUS, the conqueror of *Carthage*, not only possessed all the virtues of the ancient Heroes, but, at the same time, was eminently distinguished for his great learning, being a man of profound science, and adorned with all the graces and ornaments of wit and polite literature. *Panætius*, who, according to *Cicero*, was the prince of Stoics, and the celebrated *Polybius*, the historian, were his constant companions, at home and abroad, attending him even in his military expeditions. His hours of peace and retirement he often spent with TERENCE, and it has been generally supposed that he assisted that comic poet in his dramatic compositions.

greatest respect. The virtuous, the moral, the patriotic BRUTUS, was so far from thinking his time mispent in the rational amusements of the THEATRE, that he made a journey, from ROME to Naples, on purpose to see an excellent company of COMEDIANS, and this too at a time when the city was in no small confusion on account of the assassination of CÆSAR. When he arrived at Naples, he lost no time, but went immediately and saw those comedians; with whom he was so well pleased that he forthwith sent them to ROME, with letters of recommendation to CICERO, requesting him to receive them, and to afford them his constant patronage. Even amidst the tumults of those times, and the hurry of his own affairs, he thought the having a good company of actors, a matter of too much consequence to the PUBLIC to be neglected.† And in such high estimation did CICERO hold ROSCIUS the player, that, when pleading the cause of his client, ARCHIAS, the poet, (as has been already observed) he makes

† BRUTUS being Prætor of the city, it was incumbent on him to exhibit Plays and public shows, that year, on the festival of APOLLO, which began on the third day of July. The success of those exhibitions answered all the hopes and expectations of BRUTUS, and of his friends; for they were received with the greatest applause by all ranks of the people; although Caius, the brother-in-law of Anthony, who succeeded BRUTUS in the Prætorship, presided at them, as the proxy of BRUTUS; it not being thought prudent for such a man who had been a principal in the assassination of CÆSAR, to venture himself, at that time, in ROME. The Tragedy of *Tereus*, written by the old poet Accius, in which there were many severe reflections on the characters and actions of Tyrants, was one of the Plays then exhibited; and was received with infinite applause, by the audience, who testified their approbation of all such passages, with tumultuous and almost incessant plaudits. These shews and plays were exhibited in the 709th year from the building of the city, in the 408th consulate—43 years before the birth of our Saviour.

makes the most honourable mention of that great actor, who had been the great orator's preceptor and instructor in *pronunciation and action*.

And, now, perhaps, it may not be amiss to take a view of the THEATRE and of the DRAMA, in *England*, the country from which we originate, as well as of *theatrical exhibitions* in the several states and kingdoms on the continent of Europe, before we conclude.

It appears from *William Stephanides* or *Fitz Stephen*, in his *Discriptio nobilissimæ civitatis Londoniæ*, that "LONDON, in his time," (the twelfth century) "instead of common interludes, belonging to the Theatre, had plays of a more holy nature: Representations of those miracles which the holy confessors wrought, or of the sufferings wherein the glorious constancy of the martyrs did appear."* This author was a monk of *Canterbury*, wrote in the reign of HENRY II, and died in the reign of RICHARD I, about the year 1191. And he does not mention those representations as novelties;

* "Once on the stage, in Rome's declining days,

When Christians were the subject of their plays,

Ere persecution dropp'd her iron rod,

And men still wag'd an impious war with God,

An actor flourish'd of no vulgar fame,

Nature's disciple; and *Genest* his name.

A noble object for his skill he chose,

A martyr dying 'midst insulting foes.

Resign'd with patience to religion's laws,

Yet braving monarchs in his Saviour's cause.

Fill'd with th' idea of the sacred part

He felt a zeal beyond the reach of art;

While look, and voice, and gesture, all express'd

A kindred ardour in the *player's breast*:

'Till as the flame thro' all his bosom ran,

He lost the actor, and commenc'd the man;

Profess'd the faith, his Pagan gods deny'd,

And what he *acted then*, he *after dy'd*."

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Lloyd's ACTOR.

novelties; for he describes all the common and public diversions in use at that time. About one hundred and forty years after this, in the reign of EDWARD III, it was ordained by act of Parliament, that a company of men, called *vagrants*, who had made masquerades through the whole city, should be whipt out of London; because they represented *scandalous things* in the little ale-houses, and other places where the populace assembled. What the nature of those *scandalous things* were we are not told; whether lewd and obscene, or impious and profane. Soon after this period, the *mysteries of religion* were made too free with, all over Europe, being represented in so stupid and ridiculous a manner, that the stories of the *New Testament*, in particular, so represented, were thought to encourage *libertinism* and *infidelity*. 'Tis supposed that those *vagrants*, as they are called in that act of Parliament, were of that species which were known by the name of *Mummers*; who used to *stroll* about the country, habited in *antic dresses*, dancing, mimicking, and shewing postures. This absurd custom is still continued in many parts of *England*; but formerly it was so general, and drew the common people so much from their business, that it was deemed a very pernicious usage: And, as these *Mummers* always went masked and disguised, they were, but too frequently, encouraged to commit violent outrages; and they often, actually, did commit great disorders." Our *anticks*, who go about masked, and begging money, in the town of *Boston*, on *new year's night*, appear to me, to be a species of these *Mummers*; only much more stupid, and much more innocent. In the 4th year of King Henry IV, an act of Parliament passed, in which mention is made of certain *waitors*, *master rimors*, *minstrels*, and other *vagabonds*, who infested the land of WALES; and it is thereby enacted, that no

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master rimor, minstrel, or other vagabond, be, in any
wife, sustained in the land of WALES, to make com-
moiths or gatherings of upon the people. These master
rimors, who were then so troublesome in Wales, most
probably were the descendants of the ancient British
bards. As to the commoiths, mentioned in this act, it
is very probable it means a certain district or circuit
of the country, which might include a number of (say
fifty) villages; the word signifying, in the Welch or an-
cient British, tongue, any district or part of an hundred
or cantred, containing about one half of the hundred.
 And that this was the case in other parts of the island
 of GREAT BRITAIN, appears from CAREW'S *Survey*
 of CORNWALL, written in the reign of Queen ELIZA-
 BETH. Speaking of the diversions of the people, he
 observes that "the *Guary miracle*, which, in *English*,
 means a *miracle play*, is a kind of interlude, compiled
 in *Cornish*, out of some scripture history. For re-
 presenting it they raise an *amphitheatre*, in some open
 field, having the diameters of its inclosed plain, some
 forty feet. The country people flock, from all sides,
 many miles off, to see and hear it; for they have,
 therein, *devils* and devices to delight, as well the eye
 as the ear." The year 1378, is the earliest date in
 which express mention is made of the *representation* of
 the *mysteries* in ENGLAND. In that year a petition
 was presented to King RICHARD II, by the scholars
 of PAUL'S school, praying the King "to prohibit some
 unexpert people from representing the history of the
Old Testament, to the great prejudice of the clergy, who
 have been at great expence in order to represent it
 publicly at *Christmas*." In 1390, the *parish clerks* of
 LONDON played interludes at *Skinner's Well*, July the
 18th, 19th and 20th; and in 1409, (the tenth year
 of King HENRY IV) they acted again at *Clerkenwell*,
 (which took its name from the custom of these parish
 clerks

clerks acting plays there) for eight successive days together, a play concerning *the creation of the world*; at which were present most of the nobility and gentry of the kingdom.

The *Moralities*, as they were called, were afterwards produced. The MYSTERIES only represented, in an absurd manner, some miraculous history, from the *Old*, or from the *New Testament*; but there appeared in the *Moralities* something of design—a fable and a moral; and also something of poetic invention; for the virtues, the vices, and the other affections of the mind, were therein frequently personified. The *Moralities*, it is supposed, were made use of to promote the reformation, in the reigns of King EDWARD the VI, and of his sister Queen ELIZABETH. In the reign of their father, that brutal tyrant, HENRY VIII, however, we find an act of Parliament made for “promoting the *true religion*,” in which is a clause restraining all *rimors* or *players*, from singing in songs, or playing in interludes, *any thing that should contradict the established doctrines*. It was also customary at this time, to act these *moral* and religious *dramas* in private houses, for the edification and improvement, as well as the diversion, of well-disposed families.

“The *Muses* now began to awaken in ENGLAND, trifling in old interludes, and aiming at a rude species of wit and humour.”—Among the foremost of such humourists, was one *John Heywood*; who was jester to King HENRY VIII, and who lived until the beginning of the reign of Queen ELIZABETH. This *John Heywood* wrote a dramatic piece which he called *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, and which is generally supposed to be the *first English comedy*. *Henry Parker*, son of Sir *William Parker*, is said to have written several *Tragedies and Comedies*, in the reign of HENRY VIII,

VIII; and one *John Hooker*, in 1535, wrote a comedy called *Piscator* or the Fisher caught. Mr. *Richard Edwards*, who was born in 1523, in the beginning of Queen ELIZABETH's reign, and was one of the gentlemen of her Majesty's chapel, and master of the children of the royal chapel, was an excellent musician, and a good poet, for the time he lived in. He wrote two comedies, in which the cry of the hounds was so well imitated that the Queen and the whole audience were delighted. After him came *Thomas Sackville*, Lord *Buckhurst*, and *Thomas Norton*, the writer of *Gorboduc*, commonly esteemed the first truly-dramatic composition of any considerable note in the English language. After these, followed the famous *John Lillie*, who was greatly admired in his day, for wit and humour. After *Lillie* (who was no despicable comic writer, for those times) the drama seems actually to have reared her cheerful and enlivening head, at once, in *England*, under the auspices of the immortal SHAKESPEARE,* the vivacious *Fletcher*, and the

* "As for the earliest writers of our stage, the little I have read of their rude beginnings seems to be a dull mass of second hand pedantry coarsely daub'd with ribaldry: In SHAKESPEARE you meet originality of the purest cast, a new creation, bright and beaming with unrivalled lustre; his contemporary, *Johnson* did not seem to aim at it."

The Observer, No. CII.

"When learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes
First rear'd the stage, immortal SHAKESPEARE rose;
Each change of many-colour'd life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new;
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting time toil'd after him in vain:
His powerful strokes presiding truth impress'd,
And unresisted passion storm'd the breast."

Doctor JOHNSON.

the correct and deep-read Ben. Jonson.* Thus have we seen that the first regular company of players, in ENGLAND, of whom we can find any authentic account, were the children of Paul's school, already mentioned, whose standing was as long ago as the year 1378; and after them, at the distance of about twelve years, the parish clerks of LONDON, who acted the mysteries at Skinner's Well. To those who may wish for further satisfaction on this head, I would advise a reference to STOW's Survey of LONDON. And now, under the auspices of Shakespeare, Fletcher and Jonson, the THEATRE, in England, rose to a pitch of unrivalled glory and excellence; when JAMES the I, under his privy seal, granted a license to Shakespeare, Fletcher, Burbage, Hemmings, Condel, and others, authorizing them to act plays,† not only at their usual house,

* "Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,
To please in method, and invent by rule;
His studious patience, and laborious art,
By regular approach essay'd the heart:
Cold approbation gave the lingering bays;
For those who durst not censure, scarce cou'd praise,
A mortal born, he met the gen'ral doom,
But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb."

DOCTOR JOHNSON.

† The English stage has never been destitute of famous actors. In Baker's Chronicle, we read of incomparable players in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, viz. Richard Burbage, Edward Allen, and Richard Tarleton; the last of whom was so generally and greatly admired, that paintings of his head were set up for signs at several inns, &c. in several parts of the kingdom. In latter times, Booth, Betterton, Wilks, and Cibber; then Quin, Woodward, Barry; and then again King, Holland, Obrien, Yates; and beyond them all, GARRICK, have adorned their Theatres. The English stage hath also produced wonderful and very excellent actresses, such as Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Clive, Miss Pope, and, now, Mrs. Siddons.

house, the *Globe*, on the bank side; but in any other part of the kingdom, during his Majesty's pleasure. Dramatic authors then abounded, and every year produced new plays: nay, so great was the passion, at this period, for shews or representation, that it became the fashion of those times, for the nobility and principal gentry to celebrate their weddings, their birthdays, and other occasions of great rejoicing with *masques* and interludes; which they exhibited with great expense and magnificence: and to this, then prevailing taste, the world is indebted for MILTON's beautiful *masque* of *Comus*, first performed at Ludlow castle. The taste and eager desire for *stage plays* continued unceasing, during the reign of JAMES the I, and during the first part of the reign of his son CHARLES the I; when *Puritanism* put an end to them. At the *restoration* of the second CHARLES, the taste for the *drama* and for the polite arts revived in ENGLAND: and from that period to the present time, the THEATRE, in that comparatively-free country hath continued to flourish, the rational entertainment, and the delight of all the more liberal, learned and refined. It must be admitted, however, that during the profligate reign of the despolute, abandoned debauchee, CHARLES the II, of *pious inclinations*, (according to the writer or writers of the preface to their prayer book, revised in the reign of this *pious Head* of the *English Church*)* the flashing wit of whose court teemed

* Could there have been a more prostituted set of *Episcopal hirelings* than those fawning arch-bishops and bishops of this Church, who composed, or assented to the publication of, the lying preface to their *Book of Common Prayer*, revised in the blessed reign of this *same Saint*, CHARLES II; in which preface these men of Belial say, they "find that in the reigns of several princes of blessed memory since the Reformation, &c.

Now

teemed with the grossest obscenity, the *stage*, like all other places of public amusement, in his then loyal-mad kingdom, was constantly disgraced with buffoonery and vile impurities.* Since that scandalous period

Now the Reformation, it is notorious, was begun in the reign of EDWARD VI, and finally completed in the reign of his sister ELIZABETH; to whom succeeded JAMES the I, of monstrous and of infamous memory, and after him the *Royal Martyr*, as blind bigotry, and lycophantic *Episcopacy* hath falsely denominated him, even CHARLES the I, of bloody, tyrannical and dissembling memory, who were the several, or only two, princes between ELIZABETH, and their then *earthly* GOD, this same blessed saint, CHARLES the II; who, in such preface, they say "out of his *pious inclination*," &c.

* "The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,
Nor wish'd for *Jonson's* art, or SHAKESPEARE's flame;
Themselves they studied; as they felt, they writ:
Intrigue was plot, obscenity was wit.
Vice always found a sympathetick friend;
They pleas'd their age, and did not aim to mend:
Yet bards like these aspir'd to lasting praise,
And proudly hop'd to pimp in future days.
Their cause was gen'ral, their supports were strong;
Their slaves were willing, and their reign was long:
Till shame regain'd the post that sense betray'd,
And Virtue call'd oblivion to her aid."

Doctor JOHNSON.

The late Doctor GREGORY of EDINBURGH, in his treatise, entitled *A Father's legacy to his daughters*, observes, that he knows of "no entertainment that gives such pleasure to any person of sentiment or humour as the Theatre"; but he recommends to his daughters, and, through them, to all young Ladies, to "avoid going to those *English comedies* that are offensive to delicacy. *Tragedy*," continues the Doctor, "subjects you to no such distress. Its sorrows will soften and ennoble your hearts." And, in his chapter entitled *Religion*, he justly remarks, that "The sight of human Misery" (which is always displayed in tragedy) "softens the heart; and makes it better, and checks the pride of health and prosperity; while the

riod, the *stage* has been gradually purifying, and the *English Theatre* at this day dares not insult the ear of modesty,

the distress it occasions is amply compensated by the secret endearments which nature has annexed, to all our sympathetic sorrows." The *moral uses* of the *tragic drama* are so beautifully displayed in the 106th Number of THE OBSERVER, that I cannot resist the inclination of communicating a pleasure, to those who may not have seen that entertaining work, by here introducing a passage from that number, in which the Greek poet, there translated, holds out to us, not to brood too seriously over our own sorrows and afflictions, but to console ourselves that our miseries are not so acute and terrible as those experienced by some others.

"To one of the poets, of the name of *Timocles*, but to which I know not, we are also indebted for a complimentary allusion to the powers of Tragedy; it is the only instance of the sort, which the *Greek Comedy* now furnishes, and I am gratified by the discovery, not only for the intrinsic merit of the passage, but for the handsome tribute which it pays to the moral uses of the tragic drama."

"Nay, my good friend, but hear me! I confess
Man is the child of sorrow, and this world,
In which we breathe, hath cares enough to plague us,
But it hath means withal to sooth these cares,
And he, who meditates on other's woes,
Shall in that meditation lose his own:
Call then the tragic poet to your aid,
Hear him, and take instruction from the stage:
Let *Telephus* appear; behold a prince,
A spectacle of poverty and pain,
Wretched in both—And what if you are poor?
Are you a demi-god? are you the son
Of *Hercules*? begone! complain no more.
Doth your mind struggle with distracting thoughts?
Do your wits wander? are you mad? Alas!
So was *Alcmæon*, whilst the world ador'd
His father as their God. Your eyes are dim;
What then? the eyes of *Oedipus* were dark,
Totally dark. You mourn a son; he's dead;
Turn to the tale of *Niobe* for comfort,

M

And

modesty, in the same shocking manner,† as it was wont in the reign of this *pious* saint, CHARLES the II, of

And match your loss with her's. You're lame of foot;
Compare it with the foot of *Philoctetes*,
And make no more complaint. But you are old,
Old and unfortunate; consult *Oëneus*;
Hear what a king endur'd, and learn content.
Sum up your miseries, number up your sighs,
The tragic stage shall give you tear for tear,
And wash out all afflictions but its own."

I will quote but two passages more from this learned and very entertaining writer, and which are too beautiful I think to be omitted; the one is a translation of a fragment, on *Old Age*, by the comic poet CRATES; the other, on the same subject, by the poet PHERECRATES.

"The last fragment is a short but touching picture of *Old Age*, and the vanity of human wishes: I think the turn of thought and expression extremely beautiful.

"ON OLD AGE.

"These shrivell'd sinews and this bending frame,
The workmanship of time's strong hand proclaim;
Skill'd to reverse what'er the gods create,
And make that crooked which they fashion straight.
Hard choice for man, to die—or else to be
That tottering, wretched, wrinkled thing you see:
Age then we all prefer; for age we pray,
And travel on to life's last ling'ring day;
Then sinking slowly down from worse to worse,
Find heav'n's extorted boon our greatest curse."

CRATES.

"Having quoted a passage from Crates on the subject of old age, I shall now select one from this author (PHERECRATES) on the same; and if the reader is curious to observe how these

† "It is not the vice of the time to countenance publications of an *immoral* tendency; to administer *moral precepts* through a pleasing vehicle, seems now the general study of our *essayists, dramatists, and novelists.*"

The OBSERVER, No. I.

of blessed memory ! From the days of Queen ELIZABETH to the commencement of the *civil war*, in 1641, the

these celebrated rivals expressed themselves on a similar sentiment, he has an opportunity of making the comparison.

“ ON OLD AGE.

“ Age is the heaviest burthen man can bear,
Compound of disappointment, pain and care ;
For when the mind's experience comes at length,
It comes to mourn the body's loss of strength :
Resign'd to ignorance all our better days,
Knowledge just ripens when the man decays ;
One ray of light the closing eye receives,
And wisdom only takes what folly leaves.”

PHERECRATES.

If the reader wishes for instruction and literary entertainment, I would recommend to his perusal the whole of that excellent work, *THE OBSERVER*, whose author cannot be too much commended for his indefatigable diligence in collecting together so many choice relicts of the ancient *Greek* poetry.

As to the *English Comedies* which Doctor GREGORY advises his daughters to avoid, it is a pity they were not all destroyed : Many of them abound with gross impurities, more especially such of them as were written in the shameless reign of St. CHARLES the second, of obscene and worthless memory. But though many of their comedies are offensive to pure, female delicacy, yet they have other comedies, replete with genuine humour and delicate raillery, and which are, at the same time, so chaste, that even the suspicious ear of old CATO, the Censor, might receive them, without the slightest offence. But, should a THEATRE, be permitted in the town of BOSTON, there would be no occasion to go abroad, or cross the *Atlantic*, for the purpose of importing *English Comedies* : The bold sons and fair daughters of *New-England* are, by no means destitute of genius, or of a refined, delicate taste ; witness the many chaste poetic effusions of some of the former, and of a multitude of the latter, among which shine, with distinguished lustre, the beautiful productions of the amiable, the elegant, and the truly accomplished, PHILENIA. If the door be opened, there can be no doubt but that, in time, this country will

the number of *playhouses*, in LONDON, was seldom fewer than *eight*, although, often, during that period, they were double that number; and yet, LONDON and WESTMINSTER, which now appear as one and the same town or city, were not so large by one half, at least, as they are at the present day.

In all the civilized nations of EUROPE, for many years past, *theatrical entertainments* have abounded and flourished; but, as I never was upon that continent, I cannot, *as of myself*, assert any thing of them; yet, though I have not been, *personally*, in FRANCE, SPAIN, ITALY, GERMANY and HOLLAND, I will submit, as well what I have met with in books, as what I have learned from gentlemen who are, or have been in some, of those countries, and on whose information I can rely. In the pamphlet, published in LONDON, in the year 1743, on their then *theatrical disputes*, there seems to be a pretty general account of the *Theatres* in most of the kingdoms and states on the continent of EUROPE, as they were at that time, and from which they do not now, as I believe, very essentially differ. In the island of GREAT BRITAIN I resided for several years, and have been in many of their great cities and attended *their Theatres*; in IRELAND I have been also, but staid so short a time there, that I did not visit DUBLIN, the capital of that kingdom, where there is a very splendid Theatre.

According to the writer on the *theatrical disputes*, in the year 1743, there was not, in his time, a city in
ITALY

will produce poets who may tower into the sublimest paths of tragedy, and lightly tread along the smiling, flowery, road of *chaste Comedy*. But if, in *sullen silence*, the door is to be, forever, kept shut, and this Gothic Statute is to remain, unreppealed, our genius will be stifled, and our ears will continue to be harraressed with nothing better than the untuned screechings of the dull votaries of old *Sternhold and Hopkins*!

ITALY in which there were not *two or three* THEATRES, at that time; and "in *VENICE* there are *eight*," although *Venice* doth not contain a tenth part of the inhabitants now in *LONDON* and *WESTMINSTER*, who have only four THEATRES to resort to—one, the THEATRE in *Drury lane*, another, in my time, called the *New House*, or *Covent Garden* THEATRE, a third, the *Opera House*, and the fourth, the *Little Theatre in the Hay Market*: I understand, however, that there is another, or a new, Theatre now erecting in *LONDON*. In the cities of *Bath*, *Bristol*, *Norwich*, *Liverpool*, and *Edinburgh*, as well as in other of their great cities and towns, the *British* have THEATRES also. Besides those in *LONDON*, in my time, I have been at the several THEATRES of *Bath*, *Bristol*, *Norwich*, and *Edinburgh*, where the dramatic exhibitions were decent, and often very entertaining, although they had no *Garricks** or other great actors and actresses, of the first

* "A *Garrick's* genius must our wonder raise."

* * * * *

"Thrice happy genius, whose unrivall'd name,
Shall live for ever in the voice of fame!
'Tis thine to lead, with more than magic skill,
The train of captive passions at thy will;
To bid the bursting tear spontaneous flow
In the sweet sense of sympathetic woe:
Thro' ev'ry vein I feel a chillnets creep,
When horrors such as thine *have murder'd sleep*;
And at the old man's look and frantic stare,
'Tis *Lear* alarms me, for I see *him* there.
Nor yet confin'd to *tragic* walks alone,
The *comic muse*, too, claims thee for her own.
With each delightful requisite to please,
Taste, spirit, judgment, elegance, and ease.
Familiar nature forms thy only rule,
From *Ranger's* rake, to *Drugger's* vacant fool.
With pow'rs so pliant, and so various blest'd,

That

first size and stamp, to display their excellencies on
their THEATRES. But

That what we see the last, we like the best :
Not idly pleas'd at judgments' dear expense,
But burst outrageous with the laugh of sense."

LLOYD'S ACTOR.

" 'Tis thus, when feeling GARRICK treads the stage,
(The speaking comment of his SHAKESPEARE'S page)
Oft as I drink the words with greedy ears,
I shake with horror, or dissolve with tears."—*ibid.*

" If manly sense; if nature link'd with art;
If thorough knowledge of the human heart;
If powers of acting vast and unconfin'd;
If fewest faults with greatest beauties join'd;
If strong expression, and strange pow'rs which lie
Within the magic circle of the eye;
If feelings which few hearts, like his, can know,
And which no face so well as his can show;
Deserve the pref'rence—GARRICK take the chair;
Nor quit it—till thou place an equal there,"

CHURCHILL'S ROSCIAD.

Character of the late Mrs. CIBBER, as a tragic actress.

From the same.

" Form'd for the tragic scene, to grace the stage,
With rival excellence of love and rage,
Mistress of each soft art, with matchless skill
To turn and wind the passions as the will;
To melt the heart with sympathetic woe,
Awake the sigh, and teach the tear to flow;
To put on frenzy's wild distracted glare,
And freeze the soul with horror and despair;
With just desert enroll'd in endless fame,
Conscious of worth superior, CIBBER came.

" When poor Alicia's mad'ning brains are rack'd,
And strongly imag'd griefs her mind distract,
Struck with her grief, I catch'd the madness too!
My brain turns round, the headless trunk I view!
The roof cracks, shakes and falls!—new horrors rise,
And reason buried in the ruin lies.

Nobly disdainful of each slavish art,
She makes her first attack upon the heart:
Pleas'd with the summons, it receives her laws,
And all is silence, sympathy, applause."

But to resume the writer on the *theatrical disputes*.
 "The *Spanish Theatre* is esteemed one of the best regulated, and filled with as good actors as any, in EUROPE. There is always present, at the exhibition of their plays, an *alcaide de corte*, or magistrate, who is attended with guards, and who keeps peace and sees that good order is observed. The Spaniards have a greater number of plays written in their language than any other nation whatever: They have not less than four thousand eight hundred written by anonymous authors; and one of their dramatic authors, the famous *Lopez de Vega*, wrote more than fifteen hundred plays which have been acted, of which three hundred and twelve have been published."

The *Portuguese* had a most superb Theatre in *Lisbon*, which was destroyed in the tremendous earthquake of 1755. In this Theatre was performed and exhibited the *Opera*, a favourite entertainment of the then King of Portugal.

"The *French Theatres*, in point of regulation are, by many, esteemed the first in EUROPE. The buildings are far from being very large; they contain only a pit, an amphitheatre, and three rows of boxes. Besides these, there are seats in the *orchestra*, which accommodate from forty to fifty persons." Such was the state of their *Theatres*, according to the writer in 1743, on the *theatrical disputes*. But within a very few years last past, three new *Theatres* have been built in *Paris*, somewhat on the plan of the ancient *Athenian Theatre*, the one for the *French*, the other for *Italian dramas*, and the third for the *Opera*. Each of these *Theatres*, according to my information, will contain 6000 auditors; and a certain part of the profits go towards supporting certain hospitals.

The *Dutch THEATRE* merits as much attention as any *Rage* in Europe; and their nation, for their steadiness

steadiness and uniformity of conduct, claim our respect and esteem." The true *Dutch plays* breathe a truly Dutch spirit, and abound with the most generous sentiments of liberty and patriotism. The famous *Vondel*, who is esteemed one of their best poets, wrote a tragedy intitled *Palamades*, which is a very regular composition, full of fine sentiments, and contains an allegorical satire upon the Stadholdership of prince MAURICE of *Orange*, for the barbarous murder of the pensionary *Barneveldt*, to whom that prince was indebted for all his honours, and whose hoary head, MAURICE, " (with the gratitude of a true prince) " brought to a scaffold for no other crime than an ardent zeal for the constitution of his country." A like zeal for the RIGHTS OF MAN, and for the liberty of their country, so lately and so gloriously exerted by the French patriots, seems to have roused up, against them, the diabolical malignity of most of the true princes of EUROPE, whose wicked devices against that enlightened, friendly, and truly-exalted, nation, it is most fervently wished, may end in their own shame, confusion, and destruction! And may the sacred fire of freedom quickly spread abroad from FRANCE into HOLLAND, resuscitate the DUTCH to regain their ancient liberty and splendour, and to trample upon every species of tyranny!—But, to return to their THEATRE. The *Dutch Comedies* do not appear to be so well written as their *Tragedies*; which may be accounted for from the manners and general disposition of that people; who are, by nature, sedate and phlegmatic, and "the polish of whose manners bears no proportion to the lustre of their many substantial virtues." Their *Comedies*, however, are, by no means destitute of wit and humour; they are, upon the whole, pleasing and instructing, and serve to render the prevailing vices of the times both odious and ridiculous.

As

As well to their *Tragedies* as to their *Comedies*, the DUTCH frequently add a kind of *farce*, called in their language *Kluchspel*, which are inimitable, especially such as are *originals*; for, within the present century, they have began to translate, and bring upon their STAGES *French farces*, which are very insipid and flimsy, when compared with the true original *Kluchspel*. In point of decorum, the true *Dutch Theatre* excels all others; their actors and actresses are all people of reputation, and cannot appear upon *that stage* when they cease to be such. Mr. *Duym*, who was their principal *Tragedian*, at the time the writer upon the English *theatrical disputes* wrote his pamphlet (now near *fifty years* since) was a reputable bookseller, by profession, and Mr. *Punt*, who was then their favourite *Comedian*, was an engraver; all their actresses were then the wives or daughters of burghers, who, as they did not absolutely get their livelihood by the playhouse, so they neither said, nor did, any thing *there*, which could blemish their characters, in *private life*. This is certainly much to their credit, and shews the laudable care which the *Dutch government* pays to the morals of its citizens. Far different is the conduct of some other governments on the populous continent of EUROPE, where we find those *Tragedies* which breathe the spirit of real liberty and genuine freedom forbidden the STAGE; while *licentious Comedies* and very impure farces are not only acted every night, but are openly applauded and encouraged by those whose examples ought to teach others to despise and abhor such scenes of ribaldry and obscenity. By the profits of the THEATRE, in *Amsterdam*, besides defraying the expenses of the house, two hospitals are maintained from the profits; which they receive, from the *Dutch play-house* funds, and which have amounted from two to three thousand pounds, sterling, a year. The

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managers

managers are six persons of reputation, who take care that every thing is paid for, with the most scrupulous exactness, making up and settling their own accounts quarterly. Thus far have I copied the sentiments and the facts, though not exactly in the very same dress I found them, in the pamphlet published, in LONDON, in 1743, on their then *theatrical disputes*. I have lately applied to Mynheer *Diederick Leertouwer*, the amiable *Dutch Consul*, resident in this town, for information on this subject, and for the present state of *their Theatre*, who assures me that the *Dutch Theatre* is carried on as formerly; but they have, in *Amsterdam*, of late years, a *French Theatre* also, which is supported by subscription, and a *German Theatre*.

The *Flemish Theatre* differs very little, in point of elegance or management from the *Dutch*; and if their decorations are not so magnificent as those of *Italy*, *France*, or *England*, they are, however, neat and becoming, which answers every necessary purpose.

In *Germany*, most of the *Princes* have THEATRES in their palaces, the expense of which is defrayed out of their own purses, and their actors are frequently of noble families; who, after gaining a reputation on the stage, are often rewarded with preferments in the army, the state, and even in the church. There is one thing peculiar to the *German stage*, in their *free cities*, where the expenses are defrayed by the audience, and that is, that the *author of a play* has a certain allowance every time his play is acted; and this continues to his heirs or assigns; so that a good play is an estate in fee, while it remains unprinted; and for this reason it is that, they take the greatest care to prevent their plays, from appearing in print, as, should that happen, there is an end of the allowance.

Thus have we seen how far the manners of a people are affected by, and may be known from, the entertainments

tainments and amusements of their THEATRES;* for we have seen, in the course of my investigations, how far *national manners* have been affected and known from their *theatrical exhibitions*; we have plainly seen that those exhibitions are a kind of political index, by which the public temper and disposition may be discovered and ascertained; and from whence we may be enabled to pronounce, with certainty, as to the *love of liberty*, the degree of public spirit, generosity, and politeness, of any people; because those particular virtues, for which a nation have the highest esteem, will always make the greatest figure in their plays, as those vices, the consequences of which they most dread, will ever be drawn and appear, on their THEATRES, in the foulest, and most odious or ridiculous colours.

Having thus considered this unsocial, this illiberal, irrational, unconstitutional, prohibitory, act, which wars against the introduction of a THEATRE among us, and which the town of BOSTON, in its *corporate capacity*, hath enjoined its Representatives to endeavour to procure a repeal of, as that *Gothic act* is contrary to, and an infringement of, the *unalienable rights of man*; having shewn the benefits and emolumentary advantages which must accrue to the inhabitants of this town, in general, and to its tradesmen and mechanics, in particular, from the erecting, decorating, furnishing, and opening, of a THEATRE, in this town, provided with all the necessary scenery, machinery, and wardrobe; having endeavoured to demonstrate that *theatrical exhibitions* are, by no means, *unlawful to Christians*, as we find neither *Theatres*, *actors*, nor the *frequenters of Theatres*, condemned by the

* See the annexed, elegant, letter, of a friend, which was written since this work has been in the press.

the inspired penmen, of the *New Testament*, but, on the contrary, we find St. PAUL, the most learned of all the Apostles, quoting, and ingrafting into, the sacred volume, several divine passages, from the *Greek poets and writers of comedy*, where such passages accorded with his own sentiments; and having also shewn that *dramatic poetry* is to be found, as well in the *New*, as in the *Old Testament*; having also shewn the rise, progress, and meridian height of the *drama*, as well as the history of the *Grecian comedy* (one species of the drama) in particular; having shewn that the THEATRE hath been approved and countenanced by some of the wisest and best men of old, and by the great and good Tillotson, of late years, as well as by the virtuous and amiable Addison, the sublime and pious Young, and other great and good men; that dramatic exhibitions have a manifest tendency to polish the manners, refine the taste, amend the vulgar, vicious, pronunciation, and to give an energetic power to our words, and may probably promote the most efficient effects on our *pulpit oratory*, by communicating a spirit of animation, and the powers of *just action*, to some few, at least, of our *young Clergymen*, and thereby, greatly aid the cause of religion; and having given a short sketch of the history of the drama, and of the THEATRE in ENGLAND, as well as a general view of the THEATRES in other parts of EUROPE; I will only add that I know of no *free state* where the *public stage* is not countenanced and protected; that even in these, our *United States of AMERICA*, there is not any very considerable Commonwealth, excepting Massachusetts in whose capital the people do not now enjoy the *innocent and rational amusement* of the THEATRE; that even our, adjoining sister state of CONNECTICUT (ever remarkable for the strict purity of her manners, and which can boast of almost as long a list of saints as ourselves)

selves) as well as our adjoining *eastern* sister-State of NEWHAMPSHIRE, hath lately expelled the four, envious, morose glooms of superstition, so far, at least, as to admit of the *manly* and rational recreations of the THEATRE among them; I hope, Sir, the House will not accept the report now under consideration; but will gratify the very respectable town of BOSTON, in its request, and permit a bill to be brought in for repealing this unsocial, this illiberal, this rigid, unconstitutional, *blue law*.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that I have not exhausted the patience of the House, on the present occasion: the subject is, altogether, new in this country, and to many good citizens very interesting; and, therefore, I thought it my indispensable duty, thoroughly to investigate, and attempt to elucidate, that subject, although, to some persons, perhaps, this dissertation may be thought to smell too strongly of the *lamp*. I confess, Sir, I have spared no pains, no labour of mind; I have consulted a variety of authors, from whom I have borrowed very freely; but which the novelty and importance of the question—THEATRE, or, *no Theatre*, I trust, will fully apologize for, and justify me in.

END OF THE SPEECH.

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The L E T T E R

TO

T H E A U T H O R,

O N T H E

T H E A T R E.

[As referred to in page 99.]



May 24, 1792.

DEAR SIR,

IF the observation which has been frequently made be a just one, that "*nothing has a more considerable and immediate influence upon the manners of a people than the turn which public amusements take among them,*" it will constitute, I think, a strong argument in behalf of a THEATRE. For, whilst *the exhibitions of the stage* are capable of giving the most exquisite entertainment, they forcibly convey the most important instruction to a rational audience; and are therefore agreeable and useful schools of refined manners, of generous and manly sentiment, of prudent and virtuous conduct. To deny that this is really the case, would be obstinate prejudice. The sages of Greece and Rome, and the enlightened of later times, in their encomiums on the DRAMA, have justified the assertion. *Experience* has done more—it has exemplified it.

Some

Some reasons why it should have so great influence, have suggested themselves to my mind. To you, who have so deeply and thoroughly studied the subject, they may not be *new*; let them shew you then that I advocate the cause you have espoused.

Let us but recollect the *offices* and *ends* of the drama, its pretensions and purposes, and we shall not hesitate in forming a true judgment of its merit. Its first endeavour is to *touch the heart*; its next to *mend it*. For the former purpose, a polished diction and an elevation of sentiment, are extremely necessary: To effect the latter, propriety of fable, interesting situation, variety of character, and, above all, *morality of lesson*, are essentially requisite. These are perfections which the *poet* will furnish. It will be the business of the *Actor*, by the vivid force of representation, to give them a peculiar influence over the mind.

It is well known, that in *dramatic exhibitions*, of all others, the human genius has opportunities of exerting and displaying itself, in the most agreeable, the most engaging light, and perhaps to the greatest advantage. In them, all the powers of oratory, all the variety of expression of which action or language are capable, and all the graces of delivery, are to be displayed. From the *stage*, where Roscius exercised all the energies of rhetoric, the *suaviter in modo*, and the *fortiter in re*, CICERO caught that animated manner of composition and elocution, to which he owed his *fame*, and its immortality.* According

* With this comedian, who was master of his art in an eminent degree of perfection, he contracted an intimacy, for the purpose of improving in graceful tone and action. MACROBIUS relates a singular circumstance on this head. He says, that Cicero and Roscius contended which should express the same thought and sentiment; the one in the most various turns of phrase, and at the same time most happily; the other, by the greatest propriety and diversity of motion and action.

So

According to Aristotle,* the *epic poem* is purely an imitation; whereas the *dramatic* is action itself. The former imitates by narration, the latter rises into actual existence, kindles into forcible life, and is the very story it would represent. Its general business, among the ancients, was the instruction of mankind. The dignity of its original institution it still maintains. *Prodesse et delectare* is still its grand characteristic. And without saying too much of a well regulated theatre, we may safely affirm that, in no other school are moral sentiment and refined manners more emphatically enforced; or vice and folly more effectually discountenanced. Its scenes give a finished display of life and manners; and exhibit in the most amiable dress, in representations the most affecting, all the dignity which manly virtue gives to the human character, and the honour and happiness with which it rewards its possessor. Moral goodness is rendered familiar to us, and appears truly amiable when set before us in such an affecting and engaging manner. As a good picture strikes the mind with greater force, and gives a more lively idea of the object represented by it than any description by words can do, so, to represent propriety of behaviour in precepts does not move the affections so powerfully as when we see it delineated in example. Narration is frequently uninteresting. Didactic discourse, cold and uninteresting. But where character is personified, and historical events exhibited, attention will be captivated, and a communication for virtuous sentiment opened to the heart. The great

So admirable a genius, cultivated with so much pains, acquired Cicero an height of reputation, that eclipsed all the orators of his country and age.—See *Macrob. sat. l. 2, c. 10.* and *Rollins's Roman Hist. vol. 10, p. 215.*

* De Poet, lib. vi.

great maxims of happiness so recommended to mankind, by introducing them thus adorned with all the graces of description, eloquence, and poetry, cannot fail of interesting, and making a deep and lasting impression on the mind. We insensibly learn to form just and impartial opinions of human life. Every amiable affection, every humane feeling, every generous sentiment is called forth, and cherished in the breast. On the *theatre*, also, the turpitude and deformity of *vice* are so strikingly represented, and so severely lashed, that the spectator shrinks with horror from its view, and is most effectually warned and taught to escape its dominion. The painful lessons of experience are spared. Prudence and wisdom are learned from the wretched consequences of guilt, there painted and described.

More particularly in the *catastrophe*, where the poet and actor exert their utmost stretch of ability to rouse every feeling of the audience, are the passions excited, and *improved*,* the mind filled with the most noble ideas, and the heart awakened to the most generous emotions.

It is said that by these means, that eminent tyrant, Alexander of *Pheraa*, who had passed his life in an uninterrupted series of cruelties, without commiseration and without remorse, was melted into tears at the exhibition of a tragedy, where the effects of calamity on the mind of the sufferer were expressly set forth before his imagination.† His heart was made

* "It is as a *philosopher*, not as the mere connoisseur in a polite art, that Aristotle gives the preference, above all other modes of poetic imitation, to tragedy, as capable of purging the passions by means of a terror and pity."—*De poet.* l. 6.

[*Mrs. Montague's Essay on the genius and writings of Shakspeare.*

† Plutarch in *Polop.* et in *Orat.* de fortun. & vit. *Alex. magn.*

to feel a kindly pity ; and gradually softened into a tender regret for the misery in which his *own* ambition and barbarity had involved others. Charmed with the noble sentiments of the poet, and affected by the pathetic description, accent and gesture of the actor, he felt, perhaps for the first time, with high delight, the sweet emotions which sympathy excites.

If *scenic representations* could inspire a tyrant with the tender sensibilities annexed to humanity and benevolence ; such as are less deficient in feeling, they may encourage in goodness and strengthen in virtue, such as are equally insensible they will have a tendency to mollify and reclaim.

"As a perfect *Tragedy*," says the elegant *Addison*,* "is the noblest production of human nature, so it is capable of giving the mind one of the most delightful, and *most improving* entertainments. Diversions of this kind wear out of our thoughts every thing that is mean and little. They cherish and cultivate that humanity which is the ornament of our nature. They soften insolence, soothe affliction, and subdue the mind to the dispensations of Providence. It is no wonder, therefore, that in all the polite nations of the world, this part of the drama has met with public encouragement."

Nor is *Comedy* unimportant, or uninteresting. Designed to shew the inconveniences arising from imprudent conduct, and irregular sallies of passion, to ridicule the follies and vices which fashion may have introduced, or habit and pride sanctioned, and to represent the true source of private enjoyment from social affections, from the judicious choice of acquaintance and friends, and from amiable and discreet conduct ; it would also direct in the conduct of life, and form the mind to virtue.

But

* Spectator No. 39.

But, my good friend, I fear I shall put your patience and candor to too severe a trial. I conclude with adopting the words of Horace, and saying of the actor,

"*Ille —
meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
Ut magus; et modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.*"

"Tis he who gives my breast a thousand pains,
Can make me feel each passion that he feigns;
Enrage, compose, with more than magic art,
With pity and with terror tear my heart;
And snatch me, o'er the earth, as thro' the air,
To Thebes, to Athens, when he will, or where."

POPE.

I am, dear Sir,
with sentiments of high esteem,
and cordial friendship,
Your humble servant,

* * * * *

JOHN GARDINER, Esq.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED
THURSDAY, 11th JANUARY 1906
THE REPORT OF THE
COMMISSIONERS OF THE
LAND REVENUE
IN ANSWER TO A
RESOLUTION PASSED
BY THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
ON 11th JANUARY 1905
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1906.

A DISSERTATION
ON THE
ANCIENT POETRY OF THE ROMANS;
WITH
INCIDENTAL OBSERVATIONS *on certain*
SUPERSTITIONS, &c.

THE ROMANS, at first, were a rude, fierce people, so perpetually engaged in wars, with their neighbours, as to have little or no leisure to attend to the cultivation of elegant and refined literature, or the politer arts; which are, generally, the happy attendants and delightful companions, of peace and public prosperity. For the period of nearly the first four hundred years of their city, the public games and shows were of the athletic kind; among which were *wrestling, boxing, and foot-racing*: In the 139th year of the city, their fifth King, *Tarquinius Priscus*, applied the wealth he had amassed, from the several neighbouring towns which he had conquered, to the building a *Circus*, wherein to celebrate the *public games*. This *Circus* he built three *stadia* and an half, or, according to *Kennet*, four *stadia*, or furlongs, long, and four *jugera*, or acres, broad; which the learned fathers, *Catrou* and *Rouillé*, compute to have been two thousand, seven hundred, and eighty-seven, Roman, feet, in length, and nine hundred and sixty feet in breadth, or width; that is, above twice as long as broad. At one end of this *Circus* stood the bounds, or starting posts, from which, in the races, the chariots

chariots started; and, at the opposite end stood the *metae*, or pillars, round which the chariots turned, in the race. The end of the *Circus*, where these *metae* or turning posts, or pillars, stood, described a portion, or segment of a circle; but the other end, in which the starting posts stood, was semi-circular, as is generally supposed. Around the inner sides, of the walls of this *Circus*, were galleries, capable of containing 150,000 spectators, who might there sit at their ease, and view the exhibitions of the games. *Tarquinius Priscus* instituted what were called the *Roman*, or *great*, games, which were exhibited in this *Circus*; besides which, other games were celebrated therein, as the games sacred to *Apollo*, *Ceres*, &c. and the *Magalenses*, or games in honour of the great goddess, *Cybele*, the mother of the gods. All the various games exhibited in this *Circus*, in time, came to be denominated *Circenses*, the *Circensian* games, or, the games of the *Circus*. "It is hard," says Kennet, in his *Roman antiquities*, "to light on any tolerable division which would take in all the public sports and shows; but the most accurate seems to be that which ranks them under two heads, *Ludi Circenses*, and *Ludi Scenici*. But, because this division is made, only, in respect of the form and manner of the solemnities, and of the place of action, there is need of another, to express the end and design of their institution; and this may be "*Ludi sacri*," (sacred games,) "*Votivi*," (Votive,) and "*Funebres*," (funeral games.) "The *Pentathlon*, or *Quinquentium*, as most of their other sports, was borrowed from the *Grecian Games*; the five exercises that composed it, were *running*, *wrestling*, *leaping*, *throwing*" (the discus or quoit) "and *boxing*."

The *chariot races*, the *ludus Trojæ* or Trojan sports, of which we have such a beautiful description in the

V. *Aeneid*,* and the *Phyrrica Saltatio*, were also among the *circenses* or games of the *Circus*. Some have pretended

* " At pater Aeneas, nondum certamine misso,
Custodem ad sese comitemque impubis Iuli
Epytiden vocat, et fidam sic fatur ad aurem :
Vade age; et Ascanio, si jam puerile paratum
Agmen habet secum, cursusque instruxit equorum,
Ducat avo turmas, et sese ostendat in armis,
Dic, ait. ipse omnem longo decedere circo
Infusum populum, et campos jubet esse patentes.
Incedunt pueri, pariterque ante ora parentum
Frenatis lucent in equis : quos omnis euntes
Trinacriae mirata fremit Trojaeque juventus.
Omnibus in morem tonsa coma pressa corana.
Cornea bina ferunt praefixa hastilia ferro :
Pars leves humero pharetras : it pectore summo
Flexilis obtorti per collum circulus auri.
Tres equitum numero turmae, turnique vagantur
Ductores : pueri bis seni, quemque secuti,
Agmine partito fulgent, paribusque magistris.
Una acies juvenum, ducit quam parvus ovantem
Nomen avi referens Priamus, tua clara, Polite,
Progenies, auctura Italos : quem Thracius albis
Portat equus bicolor maculis ; vestigia primi
Alba pedis, frontemque ostentans arduus albam.
Alter Atys, genus unde Atti duxere Latini :
Parvus Atys, pueroque puer dilectus Iulo.
Extremus, formaque ante omnes pulcher Iulus,
Sidonio est investus equo ; quem candida Dido
Esse sui dederat monumentum et pignus amoris.
Caetera Trinacriis pubes senioris Aestiae
Fertur equis.
Excipiunt plausu pavidos, gaudentque tuentes
Dardanida, veterumque agnoscunt ora parentum.
Postquam omnem laeti confessum oculosque suorum
Lustravere in equis ; signum clamore paratis
Epytides longe dedit, insonuitque flagello.
Olli discurrere pares, atque agmina terni
Diductis solvere choris, rursumque vocati
Convertere vias, infestaque tela tulere.

pretended that *Minerva*, or, the goddess of wisdom,
was the inventress of this warlike dance; asserting
that

Now call'd the prince, before the games were done,
The hoary guardian of his royal son,
And gently whispers in his faithful ear,
To bid *Ascanius* in his arms appear,
And with his youthful band and courser come,
To pay due honours at his grandfire's tomb.
Next he commands the huge assembled train
To quit the ground, and leave an open plain.
Strait on their bridled steeds, with grace divine;
The beauteous youths before their fathers shine:
The blooming Trojans and Sicilians throng,
And gaze with wonder as they march'd along,
Around their brows a vivid wreath they wore;
Two glitt'ring lances tipt with steel they bore:
These a light quiver stor'd with shafts sustain,
And from their neck depends a golden chain.
On bounding steeds advance three graceful bands,
And each a little blooming chief commands.
Beneath each chief twelve sprightly striplings came;
In shining arms, in looks and age the same.
Grac'd with his grandfire's name, *Polites*' son,
Young *Priam*, leads the first gay squadron on;
A youth, whose progeny must *Latium* grace:
He press'd a dappled steed of *Thracian* race:
Before, white spots on either foot appear,
And on his forehead blaz'd a silver star.
Atys the next advanc'd, with looks divine,
Atys the source of the great *Attian* line:
Iulus friendship grac'd the lovely boy:
And last *Iulus* came, the pride of *Troy*,
In charms, superior to the blooming train;
And spurr'd his *Tyrian* courser to the plain;
Which *Dido* gave the princely youth, to prove
A lasting pledge, memorial of her love.
Th' inferior boys on beauteous coursfers ride,
From great *Acestes*' royal stalls supply'd.
Now flush'd with hopes, now pale with anxious fear,
Before the shouting crowds, the youths appear;

P

The

that that goddess, led up a dance, clad in armour, immediately after the conquest of the Titans; others, again, impute it to the *Curetes* or *Corybantes*, who guarded *Jupiter*, while he was an infant, in his cradle, leaping up and down, and clashing their arms, striking their shields with their spears, in order to prevent *Saturn* from hearing the cries of, thereby finding him out, and then devouring, his son. *PLINY*, again, attributes the invention of this dance to *Phyrrus* the son of *Achilles*, who employed a company of dancers to perform such a dance at the funeral of his father. This *Circus* of *Tarquinius Priscus* was, in after times, repaired and extremely beautified and adorned, by *Julius Caesar*, *Augustus*, *Caligula*, *Domitian*, *Trajan*, and *Heliogabalus*; and was, so greatly, enlarged, as, conveniently to hold and accommodate with seats, 260,000 persons. In the latter ages of the *Roman Empire*, it was denominated *Circus maximus*,

Inde alios ineunt cursus aliosque recurfus
 Adversis spatii, alternosque orbibus orbes
 Impediunt, pugnaeque cident simulacra sub armis.
 Et nunc terga fuga nudant; nunc spicula vertunt
 Inseni; facta pariter nunc pace feruntur.
 Ut quondam Creta fertur labyrinthus in alta
 Parietibus textum caecis iter, ancipitemque
 Mille viis habuisse dolum, qua signa sequendi
 Falleret indeprehenfus et irremeabilis error.
 Haud aliter Teuctrum nati vestigia cursu
 Impediunt, texuntque fugas et praelia ludo,
 Delphinum similes, qui per maria humida nando
 Carpathium Libycumque secant, luduntque per undas.
 Hunc morem, hos cursus, atque haec certamina primus
 Ascanius, Longam muris cum cingeret Albam,
 Rettulit, et priscos docuit celebrare Latinos:
 Quo puer ipse modo, secum quo Troia pubes,
 Albani docuere suos, hinc maxima porro
 Accepit Roma, et patrium fervavit honorem;
 Trojaque nunc, pueri Trojanum dicitur agmen."

mus, the great, or largest, *Circus*, to distinguish it from the lesser *Circi*, as those of *Flaminius*, *Nero*, &c. In this *Circus*, also, as well as in their permanent *THEATRES*,* were

The shouting crowds admire their charms, and trace
 Their parent's lines in every lovely face.
 Now round the ring, before their fathers, ride
 The boys, in all their military pride,
 Till *Periphantes*' sounding lash from far
 Gave the loud signal of the mimic war;
 Strait, in three bands distinct, they break away,
 Divide in order, and their ranks display:
 Swift at the summon, they return, and throw
 At once their hostile lances at the foe:
 Then take a new excursion on the plain;
 Round within round, an endless course maintain;
 And now advance, and now retreat again;
 With well-dissembled rage their rivals dare,
 And please the crowd with images of war.
 Alternate now they turn their backs in flight,
 Now dart their lances, and renew the fight:
 Then in a moment from the combat cease,
 Rejoin their scatter'd bands, and move in peace.
 So winds delusive, in a thousand ways
 Perplex and intricate, the Cretan maze;
 Round within round, the blind *Mæanders* run,
 Untrac'd and dark, and end where they begun.
 The skilful youths, in sport, alternate ply
 Their shifting course; by turns they fight and fly:
 As dolphins gambol on the watry way,
 And, bounding o'er the tides, in wanton circles play.
 This sport *Ascanius*, when in mighty length
 He rais'd proud *Alba* glorying in her strength,
 Taught the first fathers of the Latian name,
 As now he solemniz'd the noble game.
 From their successive Alban offspring come
 These ancient plays, to grace imperial Rome;
 Who owns her Trojan band, and game of Troy
 Deriv'd thro' ages from the princely boy." PITT.

* The first permanent Theatre which was built at Rome was the Theatre of POMPEY THE GREAT; it was much celebrated,

were seen the savage and bloody exhibitions of *Gladiators* and of wild beasts, who were made to fight with, and

ed, by the ancients, for its grandeur and magnificence. "It was surrounded by a portico, to shelter the company in bad weather, and had a curia or senate-house annexed to it; with a basilica also, or a grand hall, proper for the sitting of Judges, or any other public business; which were all finished at POMPEY's cost, and adorned with a great number of images of men and women, famed for something very remarkable or prodigious in their lives and characters. ATTICUS undertook the care of placing all these statues; for which POMPEY charged CICERO with his thanks to him. What made this fabric the more surprising and splendid, was a beautiful temple, erected at one end of it to Venus the Conqueress; and so contrived, that the seats of the theatre might serve as stairs to the temple. This was designed, it is said, to avoid the reproach of making so vast an expense for the mere use of luxury; the temple being so placed that those who came to the shows might seem to come to worship the Goddesses. At the solemnity of this dedication, POMPEY entertained the people with the most magnificent shows, which had ever been exhibited in Rome: In the theatre, were stage-plays, prizes of music, wrestlings, and all kinds of bodily exercise: In the circus, the horse-races, and huntings of wild beasts for five days successively, in which five hundred lions were killed; on the last day, twenty elephants; whose lamentable howling, when mortally wounded, raised such a commiseration in the multitude, from a vulgar notion of their great sense and love to man, that it destroyed the whole diversion of the show, and drew curses upon POMPEY himself, for being the author of so much cruelty. So true it is, what CICERO observes of this kind of prodigality, that there is no real dignity or lasting honour in it; that it satiates while it pleases, and is forgotten as soon as it is over. It gives us however a genuine idea of the wealth and grandeur of those principal subjects of Rome, who from their private revenues could raise such noble buildings, and provide such shows from the several quarters of the world, which no Monarch on earth is now able to exhibit."

If we are astonished at the magnificence of this THEATRE of POMPEY, and the vast expense of the shows exhibited at the festival of its dedication, what shall we say to the magnificence and

and to destroy, each other, and the latter sometimes to fight with men. In this *Circus*, also, they were often hunted; and, here, were often exhibited, horse-races, as well as chariot-races.

In

and unbounded expense of the celebration of the *Roman games* in after times, by CARINUS? "The only merit of the administration of CARINUS (says Mr. Gibbon) that history could record, or poetry celebrate, was the uncommon splendour with which, in his own, and in his brother's name, he exhibited the *Roman games* of the theatre, the *circus* and the amphitheatre. More than twenty years afterwards, when the courtiers of Dioclesian represented to their frugal sovereign the fame and popularity of his munificent predecessor, he acknowledged, that the reign of CARINUS had indeed been a reign of pleasure. But this vain prodigality, which the prudence of Dioclesian might justly despise, was enjoyed with surprise and transport by the *Roman people*. The oldest of the citizens recollecting the spectacles of former days, the triumphal pomp of Probus or Aurelian, and the secular games of the Emperor Philip, acknowledged that they were all surpassed by the superior magnificence of CARINUS."

"The spectacles of CARINUS may, therefore, be best illustrated by the observation of some particulars, which history has condescended to relate, concerning those of his predecessors. If we confine ourselves solely to the hunting of wild beasts, however we may censure the vanity of the design, or the cruelty of the execution, we are obliged to confess, that neither before nor since the time of the *Romans* so much art and expense have ever been lavished for the amusement of the people. By the order of Probus, a great quantity of large trees torn up by the roots, were transplanted into the midst of the *Circus*; the spacious and shady forest, was immediately filled with a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, a thousand fallow deer, and a thousand wild boars; and all this wild game was abandoned to the riotous impetuosity of the multitude. The tragedy of the succeeding day consisted in the massacre of a hundred lions, an equal number of lionesses, two hundred leopards, and three hundred bears. The collection prepared by the younger Gordian for his triumph, and which his successor exhibited in the secular games, was less remarkable

In the early ages of their city, the *Romans* seem to have known nothing of the sublimities of chaste and truly

able by the numbers than by the singularity of the animals. Twenty Zebras displayed their elegant forms, and variegated beauty to the eyes of the *Roman* people. Ten Elks, and as many Cameleopards. The loftiest and most harmless creatures that wander over the plains of *Sarmatia* and *Ethiopia*, were contrasted with thirty *African* hyænas, and ten *Indian* tigers, the most implacable savages of the torrid zone. The unoffending strength with which nature has endowed the greater quadrupeds was admired in the Rhinoceros, the Hippopotamus of the *Nile*, and a majestic troop of thirty two elephants. While the populace gazed with stupid wonder on the splendid show, the naturalist might indeed observe the figure and properties of so many different species, transported from every part of the ancient world into the amphitheatre of *Rome*. But this accidental benefit, which science might derive from folly, is surely insufficient to justify such a wanton abuse of the public riches. There occurs, however, a single instance in the first *Punic* war, in which the senate wisely connected this amusement of the multitude with the interest of the state. A considerable number of Elephants, taken in the defeat of the *Carthaginian* army, were driven through the *Circus* by a few slaves, armed only with blunt javelins. The useful spectacle served to impress the *Roman* soldier with a just contempt for these unwieldy animals; and he no longer dreaded to encounter them in the ranks of war."

"The hunting or exhibition of wild beasts was conducted with a magnificence suitable to a people who styled themselves the masters of the world; nor was the edifice appropriated to that entertainment, less expressive of *Roman* greatness. Posterity admires, and will long admire, the awful remains of the amphitheatre of *Titus*, which so well deserved the epithet of *Colossal*. It was a building of an elliptic figure, five hundred, and sixty-four feet in length, and four hundred and sixty-seven in breadth, founded on four-score arches, and rising, with four successive orders of architecture, to the height of one hundred and forty feet. The outside of the edifice was encrusted with marble, and decorated with statues. The slopes of the vast concave which formed the inside, were filled and surrounded

truly-classic poetry. All the poetry they then possessed were certain *martial songs*, or hymns, of the *Salii*, which were composed by the Sabine philosopher, *Numa Pompilius*, their second King, and certain heroic songs, which they sung at festivals and private entertainments, in honour of those great and illustrious men who had accomplished some glorious achievement

surrounded with sixty or eighty rows of seats of marble, likewise, covered with cushions, and capable of receiving with ease above four-score thousand spectators. Sixty-four vomitories (for by that name the doors were very aptly distinguished) poured forth the immense multitude; and the entrances, passages, and stair-cases, were contrived with such exquisite skill that each person, whether of the senatorial, the equestrian, or the plebeian order, arrived at his destined place without trouble or confusion. Nothing was omitted, which, in any respect, could be subservient to the convenience and pleasure of the spectators. They were protected from the sun and rain by an ample canopy, occasionally drawn over their heads. The air was continually refreshed by the playing of fountains, and profusely impregnated by the grateful scent of atomatics. In the centre of the edifice, the arena or stage, was strewed with the finest sand, and successively assumed the most different forms. At one moment it seemed to rise out of the earth, like the garden of the *Hesperides*, and was afterwards broken into the rocks and caverns of *Thrace*. The subterraneous pipes conveyed an inexhaustible supply of water; and what had just before appeared a level plain, might be suddenly converted into a wide lake, covered with armed vessels, and replenished with monsters of the deep. In the decoration of these scenes, the *Roman* emperors displayed their wealth and liberality; and we read, on various occasions, that the whole furniture of the amphitheatre was either of silver, or of gold, or of amber. The poet who describes the games of *Carinus*, in the character of a shepherd, attracted to the capital by the fame of their magnificence, affirms that the nets designed as a defence against wild beasts, were of golden wire; that the porticos were gilded, and that the belt or circle which divided the several ranks of spectators from each other, was studded with a most beautiful mosaic of precious stones.

ment or rendered some notable service to their country. In process of time, they became acquainted with the rude *Fescennine* verses of *Hetruria*, which they adopted, and which they finally prostituted to the purposes of wantonly and scandalously libelling the most worthy and exalted men in their nation. To put an end to such licentiousness, laws, with severe penalties, were made, which fully answered the purpose intended. Their poets (such as they were) then produced, on their stage, what they denominated *Satires*; which were compositions much more polished and decent than the former *Fescennine* or *Saturnian* verses; and these *Satires* continued the principal *Ludi Scenici*, or public stage exhibitions, of the *Romans* until the 514 year of their city; when *Livius Andronicus*, a native of *Greece*, first introduced the regular drama among them. But to explain all this more fully—the *Salii* were the priests of *Mars*, the god of war; their order was instituted by *Numa Pompilius*, in the VIII. year of his reign, and in the XLVIII year of the city; at a time when *Rome* was afflicted with the pestilence. The priests of this order were, at first, twelve in number, and were all of senatorial rank. Their principal business was to attend the temple of *Mars*, and there take care of certain brazen shields which were hung up in that temple. These shields were in number twelve, and were called *Ancilia*, one of which, of an extraordinary make, *Numa* pretended had fallen down from heaven; and upon the preservation of which the King declared, the nymph *Egeria* and the muses had told him, the future health and prosperity of the city depended. To prevent such an inestimable gift from being afterwards stolen or carried off, *Numa* ordered one *Mamurius*, a skilful artist, to make eleven other brazen shields, in size and figure, so exactly alike to this divine shield, that, that shield could not afterwards

afterwards be distinguished from either of such eleven shields, nor either of those eleven from the heavenly shield, delivered to the workman, as a pattern. When *Mamurius* had finished his eleven shields, they, with the divine shield, were hung up in the temple of *Mars*, and the twelve *Salii* were appointed the keepers of the same. These *Salii*, who took their name from one *Salius*, the principal of a band of musicians which the Arcadian King, *Evander*, brought with him into Italy from *Arcadia*, were dressed in habits striped with purple, and each of them was armed with a brazen helmet, breast-plate, and broad belt clasped together with large, brass buckles. The festival of the miraculous descent of the heavenly shield was commemorated, annually, on the first day of March, when the *Salii* marched out of the temple of *Mars*, each carrying one of the sacred shields, on his left arm, and a javelin in his right hand; with which they proceeded through the city, in magnificent procession, dancing and singing their hymns, to the sound of musical instruments. Sometimes they all sung together, in concert; sometimes one voice only led off the strain, which, in the end, was closed by the whole chorus: Sometimes one only danced, who was called *Præsul*, and headed the band, leading off and regulating the dance, and giving the just time and measure, by beating upon his shield with his javelin, all the others watching him, and each striking his own particular shield, in the same manner as their *Præsul*. I am led to imagine that their dances were not very unlike the warlike dances of our Indians, one of which I remember to have seen, when a boy, in the *Common* of BOSTON. Each Indian, in the dance, sung and kept an even, steady, pace, the greater part of the time, moving rather slowly, and at times leaping up, and then striking the ground quick and smartly, with his

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feet

feet, three or four times successively. He that performed the best and shook the ground the most vehemently, as I then understood, was allowed to be the best man, and the greatest warrior. In supposing that there was a similarity in the dances of the *Salii* and of our savages of the wilderness, I am somewhat justified, I apprehend, from HORACE, *Carm.* 36. *lib.* 1,

*Nec morem Salii sit requies pedum.**

And again, *Carm.* 1. *lib.* 4,

In morem Salii ter quatient humum.

which translated literally is "after the manner of the *Salii*, they shall thrice shake the ground," some parts of these Hymns, if we may credit *Cicero*, *Horace*, *Quintilian* and others, were not very intelligible; and so much the better, perhaps, for the great herd, who, generally, venerate most what they least understand, or which they cannot comprehend.

*Jam Saliare Numæ, carmen qui laudat, & illud,
Quod mecum ignorat, solus vult scire videri.†*

HOR. *Epist.* 1, *lib.* ii.

QUINTILIAN asserts that these Hymns were hardly understood even by the priests, the *Salii*, themselves. *Saliare carmina vix sacerdotibus suis satis intelligenda*, says QUINTILIAN.

All false religions have abounded with ridiculous superstitions and unintelligible mysteries, and to the unintelligibilities (the more monstrously absurd the more credible!) the multitude have generally, appeared to be the most zealously attached. Would to God the

* "Like *Salian* priests the dance we'll lead,
And many a mazy measure tread." FRANCIS.

† "He, to whom *Numa's* hymns appear divine,
Although his ignorance be great as mine."—FRANCIS.

the true religion had, never been corrupted by the unfathomable, dark, unintelligibilities of selfish, designing, crafty, knavish, priests; but their motto was, *hoc facit pro nobis*—"grist to our mill."—Even the holy, lying, father Saint *Jerom*,* or the impenetrable Saint *Austin*, I do not now recollect which, has, seriously, told us, *credo quia impossibile est*. "I believe it, because I know it to be impossible." What dreadful, unintelligible fables have not the ecclesiastic descendants of the ancient Romans introduced into the purest system of religion the world ever knew? Witness, among other of their unintelligible nonsense, *transubstantiation*, *purgatory*, the *worship* of pretended *saints*, pretended miracles wrought by the *bones*,† &c. of many a canonized villain, &c. &c. &c. The true religion is a plain, intelligible rule of right, no ways contradictory to *reason*, and consists of two, plain, intelligible, rules of conduct, teaching man his duty to God and his duty to his *neighbour*,‡. But to return, for the present to

* This lying father says, the Lord sent two angels to give him a sound whipping for mispending his time, in reading *Virgil* and *Cicero*.

† Witness one of my own native townsmen and countrymen, who is now a *Catholic Priest*, among us, and who was converted, to the true faith, by the miracle-working bones of the blessed *St. Benedict de Labre*, at *Rome*.

‡ "What doth the LORD require of thee, O man, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" *Micah* vi, 8.

The divine teacher, after *Moses*, hath said, "*Thou shalt love THE LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." What more, the *Pope*, the *Devil*, or the whole *Hoci Paci*, or conjurors, of high church, may say, I regard not,

to our principal subject, the ancient poetry of the Romans. TULLUS HOSTILIUS, the immediate successor of Numa, added twelve more to the number of the *Salii*, so that ever after their number was kept up twenty-four. Although the hymns of these *Salii* were originally intended to be sung in honour of the gods only, it became usual, in time, to introduce, or mention, while they were singing those hymns, the names of their heroes and more illustrious men; and from thence originated a custom which afterwards prevailed, at their feasts and entertainments, as well private as public, of singing heroic songs, in honour of their renowned and more illustrious characters; which they accompanied with the music of the flute, and sometimes also, of the harp. And these are the songs of which CICERO, in his *Brutus*, regrets the loss. "I wish" (says that excellent writer) "that those songs, or verses, were now extant, which for so many ages used to be sung at our public and private entertainments, in honour of illustrious men, which CATO in his treatise *de originibus*, particularly mentions"—*Utinam extarent illa carmina, quæ multis sæculis ante suam Ætatem in epulis esse cantata a singulis convivis de clarorum virorum laudibus, in Originibus scriptum reliquit.*—CATO.

The next species of rude poetry the ROMANS became acquainted with were the old *Fescennine*-verses. These *Fescennine* verses, or poems, were a rude species of rustic poetry, which originated in *Fescennina*, a town of *Heiruria* or *Tuscany*, and took their rise from accident. The *Fescennini*, at a certain festival of *Ceres*, (the goddess of corn and tillage) were offering large platters, filled with all manner of fruits, to their goddess. Warmed with plenty of wine, and in high glee and jollity at the sacred feast, one of the company, while they were performing their rude, rustic dance, in honour of their deity, upbraided another

another of that company with keen, severe, sarcasm, in extempore, coarse, doggrel, verse, a little raised from common prose; the other, mimicking his assailant, immediately retorted upon him, and returned the rough compliment, in like doggrel, with all the clownish severity in his power.

Such was the origin of the *Saturnian*, or old *Fescennine* verses, which the *Hetrurians* thus introduced and afterwards continued as part of their religious rites, constantly singing these rude, satirical verses, at their solemn festivals, and accompanying them with the sound of the flute and dancing. Besides the alternate, coarse jokes and severe invectives, they, from time to time, introduced obscene jests into these verses or songs, accompanying the same with indecent gestures; and, often, they confined not their railleries merely to one another, but cast bitter taunts and cutting sarcasms on some of the audience. Such was the state of this barbarous poetry, when ROME, in the 389th year of the city, wisely sent into *Hetruria* for a band of these performers, to stop the devastations of the plague, which then raged with unrelenting fury among her citizens. The ROMANS had been afflicted with this dreadful visitation, the preceding year; in the latter part of which, among others, it carried off the great *Furius Camillus*. Previous to their sending into *Hetruria* for these *Histriones*,* or stage-players, the ROMANS had recourse to a very extraordinary recipe to drive away the plague. It had been prescribed, on a former occasion, (in the 354th year of the city) by

* The word *Hister*, in the *Hetrurian*, or *Tuscan*, language, signified a player or dancer. As the first stage exhibitions in ROME were performed by these *Histriones*, from *Hetruria*, the Romans adopted the word into their language, and ever after denominated stage-players, *Histriones*.

by the *Duumviri*,† who had the care of the *Sybilline* books, at a time when a great mortality prevailed among men and beasts. They pretended to find, in their books, a kind of expiation never before used in *Rome*. They ordered the statues of two of their goddesses, *Latona* and *Diana*, and of four of their gods, *Apollo*, *Hercules*, *Mercury* and *Neptune*, to be taken down from their niches, and laid upon three beds, which they placed about a table, on which were served up, to those deities, for eight days together, the most magnificent repasts. The heads of private families imitated these public ceremonies, and every one kept open house, in which he liberally entertained friend and stranger. All law process was prohibited during the festival, disputes and animosities were suspended, and those who had been at enmity before, now sat down at the same table, and socially conversed together. The prisons were thrown open,

† “These officers were afterwards increased to 10 (*Decemviri*), and then to 15 (*Quindecimviri*.) It was their business to consult the *Sybilline* books, whenever the Senate thought it proper: But recourse was had to them, in times only of public distress; as when a dangerous sedition threatened the state, when the *Roman* armies had been defeated, or when any of those prodigies appeared, which were thought fatal to *Rome*; as for instance, an eruption of the fire of *Vesuvius* or *Aetna*, or some monstrous birth of man or beast. Then the *Duumviri* had the care of putting in execution, whatever they thought commanded by the books of the *Sybils*. They presided over the sacrifices, and public sports, which they appointed, to appease the wrath of heaven. And lastly, they ordered every thing that related to the *Ludi Seculares*. Their office was for life, and they were exempted from taxes, as well as from civil and military employments. This sort of magistracy continued at *Rome* till the time of *Theodosius*, when it was abolished with the rest of the *Roman* superstitions.”

open, and all the prisoners were released from their irons and confinement, in order that, even, *they* might participate of the general, public rejoicings: And so strict a regard did the ROMANS observe, on this occasion, to what they considered as a *religious obligation*, that those who had been thus released, to partake of the general festivity, were not molested again, or deprived of their liberty when the festival was over; so that this superstitious ceremony, which was called *Læti-sterium* (which may be translated laying in, or putting to bed) operated as a general pardon and goal delivery. But, alas! all this pompous display of ostentatious ceremony, feasting, and charity, did not operate upon the virulent distemper. The plague continued to rage, and to sweep away multitudes of men and of cattle.

The great *religious recipe* of the *Læti-sterium* not now answering the end proposed, the infatuated citizens of ancient ROME had recourse to a new superstition, to coax or frighten away the plague. They had heard of the *Fescennine verses* of *Hetruria*, and what merriment they occasioned at the festivals of their gods; and, supposing that heaven must be pleased when his creatures are merry and gay, they sent for a band of *Histriones* from thence, in order to dispel the gloom which then covered the city. These *Hetrurian stage-players* arriving in ROME, a temporary, wooden stage was erected, for them to exhibit upon, in the *Circus*, near to the banks of the *Tiber*, in the shade; where, by their buffoonery, antic postures, alternate, jocular, railleries, music and dances, they might put the people into gay, good humour, and laugh away the pestilence. Here, the *Histriones*, exhibited, their *religious* ceremony, (till then new to the ROMANS) dancing and singing their verses to the music of the flute, and keeping time with

with their motions and gestures. The very learned author of *Memoirs of the Court of AUGUSTUS*, whom Doctor Samuel Johnson hath very illiberally bespattered, although he is compelled to applaud that work, in his 11th book, says, that "A few players, or rather dancers, were procured from *Tuscany*, who without any words, or poetical composition, without any *Action* adapted to a character, only danced to the flute, after the graceful *Tuscany* manner.* But *LIVY*, the Latin historian

*" Under these strong prejudices, LEARNING stole upon the Romans, if I may so say, against their will. It first crept in by the door of *superstition*, which introduced the rude beginnings of the STAGE. In modern times it would scarce be thought credible, that religion should be the parent of plays; but it held true, both at the birth of the old Roman theatre, and likewise of the modern Italian, when Europe was regenerated from barbarity. It was on such high festivals as Easter and Christmas, that the strolling Italian actors represented Adam and Eve, Abraham and Isaac, Moses and Pharaoh; and that the French comedians issued their play bills, for the whole Acts of the Apostles to be play'd in a Carnival. These, it is true, were afterwards suppressed by the wisdom of that august body, the Parliament of Paris. But plays continued a part of the Roman religion while their State lasted, and took their rise in this manner.

"About the 390th year of the city, a pestilence raged long at Rome, of which the famed *Furius Camillus* died, five and twenty years after he had rescued it from the Gauls. They tried every method of cure that could be devised; but finding the fury of the disease, nothing diminished either by human or divine prescriptions, they abandoned themselves to *superstition*; and, among other propitiations of the wrath of heaven, stage plays were said to be introduced. It was a new sight to a warlike people who had only seen the games in the circus; and the beginnings of this foreign entertainment were like those of most other things, very inconsiderable. A few players, or rather dancers, were procured from *Tuscany*, who without any words or poetical composition, without any action adapted to a character, only danced to the flute after the

historian, says, that the *Histriones* who were first brought from Tuscany to ROME, played "Not like their old *Fescennine* verses, in which they used to cast extempore, coarse, jokes, alternately, at each other; but that what these *Histriones* then acted was a kind of decent farce or satire, accompanied with music and dances, and with motions properly suited to the subject. *Non sicut ante Fescennino versu similem, compositum temere ac rudem alternis jaciebant; sed impletas modis Satiras, descriptio jam ad tibicinem cantu, motuque congruenti peragebant.*" LIV. lib. 7. The plague, paid as little attention to the stage exhibitions of these *Histriones* as it had before paid to the *Læti-sternium*. But although these public stage exhibitions, of the *Histriones* of *Hetruria*, did not conquer the plague; yet the ROMANS were so delighted with those stage exhibitions, that they would not consent to discard these *Ludi Scenici*, thus introduced among them; but gaining, from these *Hetrurian*, or *Tuscan*, *Histriones*, a thorough knowledge of their old *Fescennine* verses, they immediately adopted them, and afterwards, continued to exhibit and perform them, on a temporary wooden stage, at the solemn festivals of their deities, as part of the religious, or sacred sports. In process of time, the Roman poets (such as they then were) prostituted these

the graceful *Tuscan* manner. These the Roman youth began afterwards to imitate on their festivals, and amid their dancing to jeer one another in a rude extemporary strain, to which they adapted the gambols of their dance. This manner of diverting the multitude being favourably received, and polished by frequent practice, the performers began to abandon their former rude raillery in alternate lines, and to act premeditated satires, that is, *miscellaneous pieces*, writ in verse, and set to the flute, which they pronounced with gestures besuited the character and subject." — *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus*.

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these *Fescennine* verses to the most scandalous purposes, therein openly and wantonly vilifying and *libelling* the first magistrates, and the most exalted characters and families in the commonwealth. This unjustifiable conduct (as been already mentioned) occasioned laws to be enacted, with severe penalties, in order to restrain such infamous and unwarrantable licentiousness.

“ *Agricolæ prisca, fortes, parvoque beati,
Condita post frumenta, levantes tempore festo
Corpus & ipsum animum spe finis dura ferentem,
Cum sociis operum pueris & conjuge fidâ,
Tellurem porco, Sylvanum lacte piabant,
Floribus ac vino Genium memorem brevis ævi.
Fescennina per hunc investa licentia morem
Versibus alternis opprobria rustica fudit;
Libertasque recurrentes accepta per annos
Lusit amabiliter: donec jam sævus apertam
In rabiem cœpit verti jocus, & per honestas
Ire domos impune minax. Doluere cruento
Dente lacesciti: fuit intactis quoque cura
Conditione super communi: quin etiam lex
Pœnaque sancta, malo quæ nolle carmine quemquam
Describi. Vertère modum, formidine fustis
Ad bene dicendum delectandumque redacti.**

The

* “ Our ancient swains, of vigorous, frugal kind,
At harvest-home, us'd to unbend the mind
With festal sports; these sports, that bad them bear,
With cheerful hopes, the labours of the year.
Their wives and children shar'd their hours of mirth,
Who shar'd their toils; when to the goddess Earth
Grateful they sacrific'd a teeming swine,
And pour'd the milky bowl at Sylvan's shrine.
Then to the genius of their fleeting hours,
Mindful of life's short date, they offer'd wine and flowers.
Here, in alternate verse, with rustic jest
The clowns their awkward rallery express,

And

The laws having put an end to those shameful and indecent libellous verses, the ROMANS introduced another sort of verses, or rather a poem, more polished than the former, and which, while it abounded with pleasant raillery, was free from all obscenity and personal abuse. This new species of poetry they called *Satire*, *Satura*, from *Satur*, full, *saturated*; written most commonly, in after times, *Satira*, in like manner as *maximus*, *possimus*, &c. were, in those times, generally spelt with an *i*, *maximus*, *possimus*, &c. tho' *Sallust*, the historian, adhered to the old way of writing, or spelling, such words. These *Satires*, which were miscellaneous poems, they sung to the music of the flute, accompanied with dances, and gestures properly adopted to the subject.* Some learned

And as the year brought round the jovial day,
 Freely they sported, innocently gay,
 Till cruel wit was turn'd to open rage,
 And dar'd the noblest families engage.
 When some, who by its tooth envenom'd bled,
 Complain'd aloud, and others struck with dread,
 Though yet untouch'd, as in a public cause,
 Implor'd the just protection of the laws,
 Which from injurious libels wisely guard
 Our neighbour's fame; and now the prudent bard,
 Whom the just terrors of the lash restrain,
 To pleasure and instruction turns his vein.

* " Few things have been more misunderstood than the rise of ancient plays, and few passages have more tortured the critics than this account of them from the historian LIVY, which I have endeavoured to make intelligible. It will be still clearer, if we reflect, that *M. Dacier's* curious remark of the *similar Origin* of the Greek and Roman Drama is certainly true; that both arose from the rude mirth of clowns, dancing on holy days; from their extemporary scoffs in alternate verse; (an image of which we have in VIRGIL's III. and VII. *Pastoral*.) came first to be formed a *VARIED TALE*, or *Satyr*,

ed men have erroneously supposed that the ROMANS borrowed their *Satires* from the Greeks, but that is a great mistake; for *Quintilian* asserts that "the Roman *Satire* was intirely of Roman invention" *Satira, quidem tela nostra est.*" It is true that the first stage exhibitions of the Greeks and of the Romans have a similar origin. We have seen the origin of the *Fescennine* verses, and how, from accident, they were called into existence, at a religious festival. In GREECE, at the festivals of BACCHUS, held in the cities, "hymns were sung, which were the offspring of the true or feigned ecstasies of a poetical delirium; I mean to speak of those dithyrambs which sometimes displayed the flights of genius, and still more frequently the obscure flashes of an heated imagination. While these resounded in the astonished ears of the multitude, choruses of *Bacchants* and *Fauns*, ranged around certain obscene images, which they carried in triumphal procession, chanted lascivious songs, and sometimes sacrificed individuals

in which these scoffs were included, and which the droll or player sung to the rustic meeting, while at the same time he acted the parts as they occurred in the tale or song. Would any of our modern ballad-singers take an old historical ditty (so our forefathers called a song set to music) where the introduced persons upbraided, threatened, or fought with one another, and sing it to their motely audience, acting the parts as they went along, it would be precisely the primitive Greek and Roman Comedy. This manner of acting continued long in Greece, even in the politest times; and when their Theatre was resounding with those masterly draughts of nature made by *Eschylus* and *Sophocles*, it still admitted the epic or narrative rhapsodists, who sung a tale of PANYASIS or HOMER, and acted the characters as they went along. The deep and surprising effect which this seeming-simple manner of performing had upon the audience, is exquisitely painted in *Plato's* ION, a dialogue so inscribed from the name of the Rhapsodist, who there talks in the true spirit of his profession.

dividuals to public ridicule. A still greater licentiousness reigned in the worship paid to the same divinity by the inhabitants of the country, and especially at the season when they gathered the fruits of his beneficence. Vintagers, besmeared with wine-lees, and intoxicated with joy and the juice of the grape, rode forth in their carts, and attacked each other, on the road, with gross sarcasms, revenging themselves on their neighbours with ridicule, and on the rich by publishing their injustice."*

"The *satyric drama* of the Greeks unites the pleasantry of comedy to the gravity of tragedy. This in like manner, derives its origin from the festivals of BACCHUS, in which choruses of *sileni* and *satyrs* intermingled jests and raillery with the hymns which they sang in honour of that god. The success they met with gave the first idea of the *satyric drama*, a kind of poem in which the most serious subjects are treated in a manner at once affecting and comic. It is distinguished from tragedy by the kind of personages which it admits; by the catastrophe, which is never calamitous; and by the strokes of pleasantry, bon-mots, and buffooneries, which constitute its principal merit. It differs from comedy by the nature of the subject, by the air of dignity which reigns in some of the scenes, and the attention with which it avoids all personalities. It is distinct from both the tragic and comic dramas by certain *rhythmi* which are peculiar to it, by the simplicity of its fable, and by the limits prescribed to the duration of the action; for the *satyr* is a kind of entertainment which is performed, after the tragedies, as a relaxation to the spectators. The scene presents to view groves, mountains, grottos, and landscapes of every kind. The personages of the chorus, disguised under the grotesque forms

* See the travels of ANARCHARSIS the younger.

forms attributed to *satyrs*, sometimes executed lively dances with frequent leaps, and sometimes discoursed in dialogue, or sang with the gods or heroes; and from the diversity of thoughts, sentiment, and expressions, resulted a striking and singular contrast.*

Here we will leave the *satire* of the ROMANS for the present, and return to their absurd *superstitions*. The grand recipe of the *Leſti-ſternium* failing to remove the plague, and no better effects arising from the *stage-exhibitions* of the *Histriones* of *Hetruria*, the bigoted ROMANS had now recourse to another *religious ceremony*, to charm away the pestilence, so exceedingly stupid and ridiculous as might raise a blush upon the cheek of even *driveling Ideocy* herself. They chose a *Dictator* (an officer of absolute authority) to drive a nail into the wall of the temple of their GREAT GOD, JUPITER CAPITOLINUS, next to the sanctuary of MINERVA, which was under the same roof with that temple. How humiliating must have been the sight, how melancholy the reflection, that any human creatures should thus trample under foot that glorious emanation of the Deity, which principally distinguishes MAN, from the *brute creation*—their REASON! Could this famous nation, at that instant, be truly said to have consisted of MEN? Surely they ought not to have been then so denominated; for, although they retained the shape and the muscular motions of MAN, yet they had discarded the noblest and most distinguishing characteristic of the human creature, and were not within the *logical definition* of MAN; who is said, by the LOGICIANS, to be *animal rationale*, “a rational animal.” Dean SWIFT very rightly rejects this definition of MAN, and gives us, in its stead, one much more just. MAN should be defined, according to the DEAN, *animal capax rationis*—“An animal capable

* See the Travels of ANARCHARSIS the younger.

capable of reason." Now, the ancient ROMANS, certainly, were not *rational animals*, when they expected to frighten away, or coax away, the plague, from their city, by such silly means as their *Lethi-sternium*, the stage-exhibitions of the *Histriones* of *Hetruria*, or by choosing a *Dictator* to drive a nail into the wall of JUPITER CAPITOLINUS, next to the sanctuary of Minerva. We can all see the folly and absurdity of these ridiculous superstitions; and yet we can see no folly, no absurdity, in some of our own superstitions, equally as absurd, and fully as ridiculous as those enormous superstitions of the old ROMANS.

The ancient Romans, who were heathens, had their mother of the gods, even the great goddess, CYBELE, whom they worshiped; the more modern Romans, who called themselves Christians, also have their mother of God, even the Virgin Mary, whom they adore and pray to. The idolatrous council was held at Ephesus, when this title was first given to the blessed virgin. The people, who had formerly cried out, great is DIANA of the Ephesians, and then adored the statue that fell down from Jupiter, had now changed the object of their worship, and applied to the holy St. Cyril, and the hierarchical conjurors of his party, to permit the holy virgin to be so called; to which Cyril and his idolatrous party agreed, after so trampling under their feet the venerable bishop Nestorius, that he died in a day or two. When the council had consented to the wishes of the idolatrous Ephesians, and had decreed that MARY should be called THE MOTHER OF GOD, the multitude kissed the feet and the hems of the garments of the bishops of the holy council, and carried their persons in triumph through the city. Where was the reason of those citizens, or the reason and integrity of the members of that council on that occasion, to admit, or to suppose, that the ETERNAL, SUPREME,

PREME, OMNISCIENT, OMNIPRESENT, INFINITE, SELF-EXISTING SPIRIT—THE GREAT FIRST CAUSE OF ALL THINGS—THE BENEVOLENT CREATOR AND PRESERVER OF ALL, could have a *mother*, and that *mother* one of his own *creatures*.* The Saviour lay forty hours in the grave, in commemoration of which

* I must beg leave here to make a quotation from the first volume of the Rev. and excellent Mr. LINSEY's *addresses to the students of OXFORD and CAMBRIDGE*, intitled *Vindiciæ Priestlianae*, in answer to Doctor Horne, since, I am informed, made an *English Bishop*, by his *Britannick Majesty*.

"Marvellous and most degrading, Sir, to us appears your doctrine concerning the ever-blessed, omnipotent, all-perfect creator; and most painful to reflect upon:

"That HE, the eternal, who was before all things, was born in time of a Jewish virgin, 1787 years since, after having lain nine months in the state of an embryo in the womb of his mother:

"That HE, the source of all wisdom and power, from being a puling, senseless babe, acquired strength and knowledge, by degrees:

"That after having served an apprenticeship to his father, Joseph, at the trade of a carpenter, HE who giveth all things to all, worked at that trade himself, for a livelihood:

"That HE, who filleth the universe with his presence, lay concealed for twenty-six years at least, in an obscure town in *Judea*, and was considered at the time by all that knew him, as nothing more than a fellow-mortal:

"That HE whom the Apostle justly styles, *ο μακάριος, the happy*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 15, a being of the most perfect happiness, was subject to hunger and thirst, and pain and suffering; was abused, insulted, and spit upon;

"AND HE, *the living God*, at last put to death by his own creatures.

"The rest of the incredible story (*y*), the enemies of the gospel will dilate upon with pleasure.

(*y*) Voltaire has done it, in his *Épître à Uranie*, which begins,
Long tems vil ouvrier, le rabot à la main, &c. &c.

But

which the primitive Christians observed the return of that season as a solemn fast. His Holiness, *Pope Gregory*, if I rightly remember, decreed, that the feast of *Lent* should, in future, continue for the space of forty days, during which time no member of *Holy Church* should presume to eat a morsel of flesh, under pain of eternal damnation, without first procuring and paying for an *indulgence*. Lay folly and church impudence, by this means, helped to fill the coffers of the holy treasury. If no *indulgence* was wanted, or could not be paid for, then the pious Christian was to

"But perhaps it is no where more fully seen, what advantage is given to the adversaries of the gospel, by maintaining the doctrine of the trinity, and Jesus to the supreme God, than in a Jewish tract intitled *Nizzachon vetus*, published in 1680, and written, as the editor with great probability points out, in the 12th century. In this there are many mistakes concerning our christian scriptures, and much unworthy abuse and groundless calumny; but such arguments are urged against the gospel, on the supposition of Christ being the most high God, as cannot be confuted. A believer of a trinity in unity would not find it easy to make a satisfactory reply to the following passage, which I give in the Latin translation; particularly to the Jew's inquiry, who was all the time in heaven, and who it was that governed the world, when God was three days dead in the sepulchre. *'Amplius quæram aliquid ex te, mi christiane: Agedum responde mihi. Tu affirmas filium natum esse ex visceribus Mariæ; dic dum igitur num pater et filius immundus, juxta cum filio, an vero solus filius in ventre delituerit? Si dicas solum ibi fuisse filium, quæso annon ipsa se mutuo destruunt verba tua? cum contendas divinitatis personas nulla unquam ratione a se invicem posse divelli. Quod si dicas tres in utero extitisse, atque ibi fuisse nutritos; necesse est concedas, quod etiam tres cum hominibus versati sint, ac tres fuerint suspensi. Quis vero toto illo tempore in cœlis erat? quoniam divisionem nullam admittunt. Quis item per id triduum quo sepulti erant, orbem gubernabat, cum nemo ex iis aut in cœlo, aut in terris degeret.'*

S

Nazzachon vetus, p. 152.

to feed on a tub of fainted *salt fish*, during the *forty days* of *Lent*, which would inevitably carry him to heaven.* Those who can believe in such dreadful nonsense, surely cannot laugh at these recipes of the ancient Romans, of their *Lecti-sternium*, the exhibitions of the *Histriones* of *Ettruria*, or the choosing a *Dictator* to drive a nail into the wall of the temple of *JUPITER CAPITOLINUS*, next to the sanctuary of *Minerva*, in order to charm, coax, or frighten, away the plague! Who can read the history of the reformation in *ENGLAND*, without feeling the most indignant resentment arise in his breast against those infernal villains of the *Romish Clergy*, who had, for ages, been plundering the benighted *Laymen*, by the most barefaced falsehoods and the most impudent impostures. Among other things, they had made the senseless people believe that a *priest* (however wicked and corrupt) could pardon all their sins, past, present, and to come! They shewed to the deluded pilgrims a bottle, which contained, as they impudently averred, some of the blood of the Redeemer of the world! This bottle was transparent on one side, and opaque on the other, and contained the blood of a duck then lately killed; while the stupid, senseless, pilgrim had any money left the bottle appeared opaque, and he experienced constant disappointment; but when he had drained

* 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Now, the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

drained his purse of the last farthing, for the use of holy church; the priest turned the transparent side of the bottle to the enraptured devotee, and he adored the blood of a domestic fowl! In the city of Naples, the descendants of the ancient ROMANS have a great annual festival when priestcraft reigns triumphant, and REASON is sacrificed at the blind altar of the most benighted superstition. A pretended miracle is performed in the sight of all the people, and the blood of Saint Januarius, the patron saint of their city, is made to liquify in the presence of the deluded Neapolitans. This saint is remarkable for conquering a very bad neighbour, even the dreadfully thundering Mount Vesuvius. I remember an account of a conquest of this kind, related by Sir William Hamilton, the British minister at the court of Naples, although I do not now recollect the year, but as well as I can remember, it was in 1764, or 1765. A dreadful eruption of the mountain then took place, similar, in many respects, to the tremendous eruption so beautifully described by Pliny the younger, in his two letters to Tacitus on that subject. The city was covered with ashes, from the mountain, the concussions were so violent as to force open all their locks, and to drive the terrified inhabitants from their houses; torrents of burning Lava rushed down impetuous from the flaming mountain, and threatened the city with irresistible destruction. To stop the course of this river of burning Lava, the poor, senseless people stuck down their crucifixes and little metal Jesuses, in the earth, at a little distance from the face of the destructive stream; but with as little effect, to answer the purpose, as their ancestors, the ancient ROMANS, tried the Lecti-sternium, the stage exhibitions of the Histriones of Hetruria, and the driving the nail, by the hand of a Dictator, into the wall of the temple of JUPITER CAPITOLINUS

next

next to the sanctuary of MINERVA, to put an end to the plague. Their crucifixes not stopping the torrent of Lava, nor conquering the mountain, they called aloud for *Januarius*, and insisted upon his being brought out to stop the fury of *Vesuvius*; but the ecclesiastics knew that the violence of the eruption had not yet arrived at its height, and they, therefore, were deaf to the clamours of the frightened multitude. They knew their own interest too well to risk the credit of the dead, miracle-working, saint; they were for staying until, from certain symptoms, they could be sure that the eruption was at the height. The people, however, continued to call aloud for *Januarius*; they grew tumultuous; they even proceeded so far as to pull down the gate of the episcopal palace. At last, the *craft* agreed to bring out the saint, and make him face the dreadful threatening mountain. His bones are enshrined or cased in silver, which is seldom, if ever cleaned. The procession began from the ecclesiastical palace—no sooner did his yellow-faced saintship appear, than the *believing multitude* turned their backsides to the mountain, and clapped their hands upon their breeches—as much as to say, now, you rascal, *Vesuvius*, who have so terribly frightened us—you may kiss our —s; for, see here is *Januarius* come to cool your courage, you dog, you! —Now, how much *wiser* was all this stupid folly than the *Lecti-sternium*, the exhibitions of the *Histriones* of *Hetruria*, or the driving a pail into the wall of the temple of JUPITER CAPITOLINUS by a DICTATOR, in order to stop the devastations of the plague, in old ROME. A few years ago a dreadful fire prevailed in the city of MADRID, to stop the devastations of which the Spanish priests, with similar proofs of insanity, marched, in grand procession, with their saints and saintesses, and paraded, to as little purpose, the streets

streets of their city. All, all, is of a piece with the *Lectisternium*, the exhibitions of the *Histriones* of *Hetruria*, and the driving the nail into the wall of the temple of JUPITER CAPITOLINUS, to stop the devastations of the plague! Let us now turn to some of the superstitions of the high English church, and see if many of those be not as contradictory, or as dissonant, to REASON, as some of the superstitions of the *ancient*, or the *modern* ROMANS. The first of their 39 articles is superstitious, contradictory and unintelligible; for if the first part of that article be true, to a plain honest mind, the latter part thereof cannot, in my opinion, be also true; and if the latter part be true, it is a direct contradiction of the first part; for, the *second person* there mentioned, had *parts* and *passions*. Their dignified clergy claim an heavenly, or *divine*, hereditary *succession*, and to have a certain *spiritual something* bottled up in their carcases, which they can communicate to whom they please, and which none but themselves and those whom they touch, for that purpose, can possess or enjoy.* They deny *transubstantiation*

* The admirable GORDON, in the 9th section of his excellent discourse, OF PUBLIC TEACHING AND TEACHERS, observes, that "for several years after the excellent Queen ELIZABETH, though the same law, and oaths and subscriptions continued, many of the clergy, *in defiance of the constitution*, of conscience and of shame, adopted all the anti-christian and corrupt claims of the Popish clergy; and through the monstrous policy of the reigning princes, this their lawless behaviour was connived at, nay, supported. For, *the court*, where all arbitrary schemes were on foot, in order to *gain its own pursuit*, humoured and assisted the clergy in theirs; and though both court and clergy became thence notoriously unpopular and obnoxious; though both monarchy and church suffered a terrible catastrophe, for aiming at more than belonged to either, the same restless spirit possessed both upon their re-establishment, and both arrogated a power to be *lawless* and forsworn, by *divine right*. This

substantiation and yet they cherish *consubstantiation*, which differs only in the name: * In short they are in a very

This spirit met another severe check afterwards, yet revived again with equal confidence; but the times since bore it worse than ever: insomuch that all the contempt of which churchmen so much complain, has been brought upon the clergy by many of the clergy themselves. Their *claims* were so *ambitious*, *extravagant*, indeed so *false* and wicked, and have been so well exposed, that *no man of common sense* could reverence the persons who made them.

"What they are, *the law certainly makes them*; what they have, the same law certainly gives them. Why would they be falsely aspiring to a *higher creation* and a *title divine*? why be deriving from God what all the world sees to come only from the bounty of societies and of particular men? *why be broaching doctrines destructive to liberty in a nation of freemen*? why assert an *extraordinary* even a *divine power* to do certain actions, and pronounce certain words, which any man who has hands and a tongue could speak and perform as well IF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE APPOINTED HIM? why would they shock all men of any discernment or piety, by fathering all their *most selfish*, all their *most earthly* and sordid opinions upon our blessed Redeemer and his holy gospel; all their *notorious falsehoods* and *contradictions* upon the word of truth? why cover apparent *ambition and avarice*, manifest vengeance and anger, with these sacred names?

"These were not ways to gain reverence; and had they gained any, it had been all false reverence, not worth gaining, indeed worse than none. Truth wants no false decking, nor any help from falsehood, but is often lost or injured by such unnatural company. Whoever speaks truth and does good, is sure of a warrant and approbation from heaven *whatever be his habit or his title*; and if he utter falsehood and do mischief, he may be assured that God will disown him; and *no name*, however solemn, *no habiliment*, however grave, or *gorgeous*, can in the least justify him.

"The

* I once discoursed with the late Mrs. MACAULEY GRAMHAM, in this town, upon this very subject, and we both agreed

a very small degree removed from the mother of harlots.
What enemies to the peace and happiness of the human

"The Apostles had no power, no revenues, nor even the countenance of authority. All *their* credit, all *their* reverence and success flowed from their heavenly doctrine and behaviour. I hope the world, which has been so long illuminated with the light of the gospel, is not worse than it was then. The gospel has been many ages planted among us; nor could the clergy be said to be still planting it over again where the people already believed and received it. The business therefore of the public teachers was, by continually urging its precepts upon the consciences of men, to improve them in *practical holiness*, to purify their lives in this world, and thence fit them for another. For this purpose they have encouragement and support from the state; and as a designation and maintenance from the civil power is all that they can desire

agreed that the only difference was in the name. They assert in their catechism, that the "*Bread and wine, is the body and blood of Christ, which is verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.*" There can be no stronger affirmatives, than *verily* and *indeed*, in any language, and if this is not an absolute assertion of *transubstantiation*, words have no meaning. The *prayer book* of the *English Church* is little more than a mere translation from the *popish mass-book*; "The chief difference between which," says Mr. HUME, "was, the retrenchment of prayers to saints and of some superstitious ceremonies, with allowance of private judgment to the *laity* in some few particulars, and the translation of the liturgy as well as the scriptures into the *vulgar tongue*. The last great doctrine of *popery* which was wholly abandoned by the people, was the *real presence*. The cause of adhering so long to this impious tenet (according to HUME) was the extreme absurdity of the principle itself, and the profound veneration which, of course, it impressed on the mind. The *priests* likewise were much inclined to favour an opinion, which attributed to *them* so miraculous a power; and the *people*, who believed that *they* participated of the *very body and blood* of their Saviour, were loth to renounce so extraordinary, and, as they imagined, so salutary a privilege."

man race, doth not history prove the *hierarchical ecclesiastics* uniformly to have been, from the time that *Constantine* cursed the world by putting them into the possession of riches and power! What cruel murders, poisonings, assassinations, devastations and misery, from that time, mark the furious course of their superstitious triumphs. *King-craft*, and *priest-craft*, have hitherto been the two great banes of human happiness; the world, however, is growing wiser, and of

desire, it is likewise all that they want. They have all possible scope to propagate every divine truth, to enforce every social and civil duty: and whilst they are thus worthily employed, no man will ever envy them, *no man can condemn them*; nay, all men will, for their own sakes, pay them all due countenance and respect.

"In this glorious pursuit they might be of excellent use to others, and gain great esteem to themselves, by making people good and government easy, for good men will be good subjects. But it will be a great obstacle in their way to esteem, if they aim at *too much*, and would derive it *only from their name and function*, however they neglect or pervert their duty, and however worthless they be in their persons. Too great a fondness for themselves, will make others less fond of them, and by deriving *their pedigree* too high, many will be provoked to set it too low, or even at nought; like vain men, who boast the greatness of their race, when their descent is known to be ordinary, and their rise late and sudden."

What they can have more than any Layman I know not, for even of the layity, St. Paul hath said, *know ye not that your body is the temple of the HOLY GHOST, which is in you, which you have of GOD?* And, again, Acts xvii. 28. *For in HIM we live, and move, and have our being*; but this was the subtilty of the craft, to pretend to the exclusive possession of a certain divine something, which enables them to work certain miracles, which a poor layman is wholly unequal to. When a stupid multitude can swallow and believe in such nonsense, they will of course look with deep veneration upon, and respect to, the episcopal lordling, and consider him as a creature, or being, of a very superior order, or nature, to himself. This, again, is rank *lay-folly* and church impudence.

of course, better; those scourges of mankind are daily growing weaker, and rapidly decaying;* and soon,
it

* "Another species of tyrannic rule,
Unknown before, whose cancrus shackles seiz'd
Th' envenom'd soul; a wilder *fury*, *she*
Even o'er her *elder sister* tyranniz'd;
Or, if perchance agreed, inflam'd her rage.
Dire was her train, and loud: the *sable band*,
Thundering—"Submit ye *Laity*! ye profane!
Earth is the LORD's, and therefore *ours*; let Kings
Allow the common claim, and half be theirs;
If not, behold! the sacred lightning flies:"
Scholastic discord, with an hundred tongues,
For science uttering jangling words obscure,
Where frighted reason never yet could dwell:
Of peremptory feature, *cleric pride*,
Whose reddening cheek no contradiction bears;
And *holy slander*, his associate firm;
On whom the *lying spirit* still descends:
Mother of tortures! *persecuting zeal*,
High-flashing in her hand the ready torch,
Or Poignard bath'd in unbelieving blood;
Hell's fiercest fiend! of saintly brow demure,
Assuming a celestial seraph's name,
While she beneath the blasphemous pretence
Of pleasing *parent heaven*, the *source of love*!
Has wrought more horrors, more detested deeds,
Than all the rest combin'd. Led on by her,
And wild of head to work her fell designs,
Came idiot *superstition*; round with ears
Innumerable strow'd, ten thousand monkish forms
With legends ply'd them, and with tenets, meant
To charm or scare the simple into slaves,
And poison reason; gross, *she* swallows all,
The most absurd believing ever most.
Broad o'er the whole her universal night,
The gloom still doubling, *ignorance* diffus'd.
Nought to be seen, but visionary monks
To councils strolling, and embroiling creeds;
Banditti saints, disturbing distant lands;

T

And

it is to be hoped, even the hellish inquisitions of *Spain* and *Portugal* will be no more, nor *kings* nor *priests* have it in their power to disturb the peace, or again injure the *Rights of Man*!

How forcibly, and how beautifully has the poet, in his *Essay on Man*, described the OMNIPRESENCE of the DEITY."

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is and GOD the soul;
That chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow's in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent;
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair, as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:
To him, no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all."

ESSAY ON MAN.

Could those among us who are so fond of the *episcopal superstition*, who believe in the nonsense of a *divine, prelatie, succession*, have read the above lines of the poetic essayist, and duly considered the great

And unknown nations, wandering for a home.
All lay revers'd: the sacred arts of rule
Turn'd to flagitious Leagues against mankind,
And arts of plunder more and more avow'd;
Pure plain devotion to a solemn farce;
To holy dotage virtue, even to guile,
To murder, and a mockery of oaths;
Brave ancient *freedom* to the *rage of slaves*,
Proud of their state, and fighting for their chains;
Dishonour'd courage to the *bravo's* trade,
To civil broil; and glory to romance.
Thus human life unning'd to ruin reel'd,
And giddy reason totter'd on her throne."

Thomson's LIBERTY, Part 4.

great truth they assert, of the *divine omnipresence*? Rank superstition and *spiritual pride* sent three *Americans*, not long since, to the realm of *England*, there to procure a certain *something*, to be conveyed into their carcases, which did not exist in their native country. In the fall of 1785, at an episcopal convention, held in the city of *Philadelphia*, it was resolved to address the Arch-bishops and Bishops of the church of *England* to consecrate, or create, Bishops of such three *Americans*. In a second convention, held in the same city, in June, 1786, a letter was received from those Arch-bishops and Bishops, "notifying their approbation of the address made to them, but expressing some hesitation, on account of a report of alterations adopted, or intended, in the American liturgy; "Lest they should be the instruments of establishing an ecclesiastical system, which will be called a branch of the church of England, but afterwards may possibly appear to have departed from it essentially, either in doctrine or in discipline."

"In their next convention, held at Wilmington in Delaware, Oct. 1786, there was read a letter from the Arch-bishops of Canterbury and York, in which, after having mentioned their having received their American Common-prayer-book, &c. they express themselves in these words; "The whole of your communications was then, with as little delay as possible, taken into consideration, at a meeting of the Arch-bishops and fifteen of the Bishops, being all who were then in London, and able to attend; and it was impossible not to observe with concern, that, if the essential doctrines of our common faith were retained, less respect however was paid to our liturgy than its own excellence, and your declared attachment to it, had led us to expect; not to mention a variety of verbal alterations, of the necessity or propriety

priety of which we are by no means satisfied; we saw with grief, that two of the confessions of our Christian faith, respectable for their antiquity, have been intirely laid aside; and that even in that which is called the Apostles' creed, an article is omitted, which was thought necessary to be inserted, with a view to a particular hereby, in a very early age of the church, and has ever since had the venerable sanction of universal reception."

"A little after, in the course of their letter, resuming the subject, they say; "

"We therefore most earnestly exhort you, that you restore to its integrity the Apostles' creed, in which you have omitted an article merely, as it seems, from misrepresentation of the sense in which it is understood by our church; nor can we help adding, that we hope you will think it but a decent proof of the attachment which you profess to the services of our liturgy, to give to the other two creeds a place in your book of common-prayer, even though the use of them should be left discretionary."

"The above accounts are taken from the journals of the different conventions, printed at Philadelphia. In what follows, concerning, this last convention at Wilmington, we are informed, that it was unanimously agreed to comply with the desire of the English Bishops, by re-admitting the Nicene creed into their American liturgy, but that it should be at the option of the minister, to read that or the Apostles' creed. The restoration however of the creed of Athanasius, so called, to its place, was unanimously negatived by three of the States, and by a majority of the other two. But Christ's *descent into hell* was again adopted and received into the Apostles' creed, though not without some negative voices; and the others might perhaps satisfy themselves with having declared

declared publicly the sense they gave it, as equivalent to his being put into the grave, or buried.

“ O ye Tillotsons, Patricks, Burnets, Tennisons, could ye have been now recalled from your long quiet repose in the grave, where Christ your master was suffered to remain only three days, how different a part would ye have acted! To how much wider a compass would ye have pleaded for your *ecclesiastical commission* to be extended, had ye enjoyed those lights concerning the equal rights of men, and the incompetency of human authority in the things of religion, with which the world hath been blest since your time, by the labours of Locke, Hoadley, Blackburne, Law, all these now, and some very lately, gathered to the same silent mansions with yourselves, waiting the resurrection-day!

“ It may be useful to subjoin a remark on the above American business, together with a short account of another transaction in that country in some connection with it; as the whole will contribute to give you clear ideas on an ecclesiastical subject, commonly involved in much darkness.

“ To a mind in any due degree enlightened by a proper use of its reasoning powers, and by the study of the scriptures themselves, it must appear the result of a strange superstition, for men, like these new American Bishops, to be sent across the Atlantic, to receive a power and authority of appointing or ordaining teachers of the gospel, which otherwise they could not have exercised with benefit or effect; and this to be conveyed to them, through the laying on of the hands of Christian ministers in England, of a particular name and description, supposed to derive their peculiar privilege and power, in a regular, uninterrupted descent and succession from the Apostles.

And

“ And it is a matter of wonder to many, that several large provinces of that new world, after having contended so intrepidly for their civil independency, should subject themselves to the having chains put upon their minds and consciences, the heaviest of all others, and binding them upon their posterity, by consenting particularly to the great alteration made in their fourth article of religion, in order to engage the English Bishops to consecrate the persons sent over to them, and also by their tacit implied purpose of not deviating any farther from the doctrine and worship of the church of England, acknowledged on all hands, by very many of its own members, to stand in great need of a reformation in both these respects.

“ As to apostolic succession, or any virtue or powers derived from it, which the church of Rome and church of England claim, it is a mere phantom, signifying nothing; which, if it could be proved to be regular and unbroken, would give no powers above what any other ministers of the gospel possess, without any such pretences. And with respect to baptism and the Lord's supper, the latter of which has been so astonishingly perverted from the simplicity of its original institution, there is no ground from the scripture, or from early antiquity, to appropriate the ministration of these ordinances to the teachers of the gospel, save what arose from propriety and decorum, and on that account very rightly to be attended to: but that otherwise, laymen, those that were not teachers of religion, might officiate by themselves in these ordinances with equal good effect.”*

The three *Americans* arriving in *England* were, by the *English Prelates*, consecrated, according to the superstition of the *English church*; that is, they received into their bodies, from the touch of the *hierarchical conjurors* of that church, a certain *invisible something* which

* LINDSEY'S *Vindiciæ Priestlianae*. Vol. 1,

which could not then be found in our UNITED STATES. Who can refrain from laughter when he contemplates such farcical, *hocus pocus*, tricks, full as absurd as, though to the eye of REASON, perhaps, rather a little more impious than, the *Lecti-sternium*, the exhibitions of the *Histriones* of *Hetruria*, or the choosing a DICTATOR to drive a nail into the temple of JUPITER CAPITOLINUS, in order to charm, from ancient ROME, a desolating pestilence !!! Our cousin, Samuel Seabury, of CONNECTICUT, for I understand he is nearer to us (I now speak in the modest, hierarchical style) than a *Welsh cousin*, of the twentieth degree, however, was beforehand with our three *Importers of the prelatie English spirit*. MR. SEABURY, or Bishop Seabury, as he is called, travelled into Scotland, before our three *Succubi** went to England, and from the necromatic touch of the scismatick Bishops of North-Britain, he there received a full portion of the true Scots spirit, with which he returned pretty well inflated, and which he afterwards freely communicated among the wondering, episcopal *Superstitiosi*,† even

* See Mather's Magnalia.

† "The suspected text 1 John, v 7, which was marked out as such in our English bibles, at the time of the reformation, and whose spuriousness has been more and more evinced since that period to the present day, by the critical enquiries of learned men, is nevertheless, in the face of all the demonstration of its not having been of the writing of the Apostle, that the subject is capable of, now asserted to be genuine" (by Arch-Deacon Francis) "with a temper and spirit, and by a method of argument, which certainly does no credit to the writer, or to the cause he would maintain." and yet, on this gentleman's hardy assertions, devoid of all proof, Bishop Seabury has lately proclaimed this exploded text to be authentic, throughout America, as far as his feeble voice and little authority can go, in a charge delivered by him at Derby in the State of Connecticut, September 1786. "I am not ignorant, says he, p. 10, that the authenticity of 1 John v.

even of the town of BOSTON. Altho' I cannot help laughing at the absurdity of such ridiculous superstitions of *High Church*, yet no man more than myself respects or reverences a true *Christian clergyman*, let him be of that, or of any other church: A more honourable and respectable member of society surely exists not than a sincere *Christian teacher* of morality, piety and genuine *humility*; one (in the words of a friend of my early years, now a clergyman of the high church) who is

" Warm without phrensy, to no sect confin'd,
With modest zeal illuminates the mind,
Clear as the light, th' important truth displays;
Then—sets the kindling passions in a blaze."

The town of BOSTON, I think, is distinguishedly happy in her *Ministers*, or public Teachers, of the various sects and denominations of Christians settled in that town, all of them gentlemen of irreproachable, moral character, and, generally, of the most liberal, charitable, and benevolent disposition. All who are well acquainted with BOSTON, know that, in this, I do not exaggerate.

Having thus observed upon high church superstitions, I shall now touch upon some other ridiculous, absurd, and monstrous, superstitions, and then return to the *Ancient Poetry of the ROMANS*.

The superstitions of *witchcraft*, and the cruel proceedings against the innocent sufferers, reflect great disgrace on our country; nor is *Great-Britain* without a blemish on the like account. The comic, festive, and absurd, superstitions of the *ancient ROMANS*, intended

7. is disputed. Nor am I ignorant that it has been *incontestably* established by the Rev. Mr. Travis, in his letters to Mr. Gibbon." *Arch-deacon TRAVIS* has since been convicted of general, and most pitiful, plagiarism from a French author, and unanswerably refuted, by the very learned, tho' young, Mr. PORSON.

tended to cleanse their city of the plague, though destitute of every principle of REASON, were, however, not merciless or cruel ; though ridiculous they were innocent ; but our modern, mad, pretended-Christian tragedies of *witchcraft* were as shocking to humanity as to REASON.

The *second-sight* of SCOTLAND, so seriously discoursed upon by that immensely-learned and nervous writer, though credulous man, Doctor *Samuel Johnson*, in his *Tour through the Hebrides*, and the similar superstitious belief in the diocese of St. *David's*, SOUTH WALES, under the name of *Fetch-candles*, must raise a smile upon the face of the most serious philosopher.

The driving of the nail into the wall of the temple of JUPITER CAPITOLINUS, to expel the plague, is nearly imitated by multitudes, in the country of *Great-Britain*, and by not a few in this part of the world ; who wisely nail an horse-shoe on the doors of their barns, and of their stables, as a specific against the malignity of *witchcraft* ; while our hardy, daring, sailors apply the same *effectual remedy*, in like manner, to the masts of many of their vessels, in order to keep off mother *Cary*, and the other hags of the infernal sisterhood.

There is another superstition known, though not very frequently displayed, in our country, which I heard of but very lately, which is almost too horrid to mention, and which, had I not been assured of the truth of its existence by a gentleman of known veracity, who lately wrote a beautiful elegy on the occasion, which he afterwards printed, but which, for certain reasons, he has since thought proper to suppress, I should have thought incredible. One child of a family dies of a consumption, and is buried : Another, in a day or two, afterwards, falls

U

sick

sick, and is supposed to be infected with the same disorder; the wretched father, in the night, goes to the grave of his deceased child, digs up the corpse, carries it into the adjoining field, cuts open the body, and takes out the heart and liver, then burns the remains in that field; returns home, and, in the chamber of the sick, burns that heart and liver to expel the wasting disease! This is too horrid to laugh at.

But let us turn from such irrational superstitions, follies and enormous brutalities, and pursue the much more agreeable subject of the ancient poetry of the Romans.

The famous *Salianator*, so called from a tax on salt, had made a slave of a certain Greek, named *Andronicus*, to whom he committed the education of his sons. The faithful slave executed the trust committed to him with such attention and diligence, that his master, as the reward of his fidelity, gave him his freedom; whereupon, *Andronicus*, in grateful return, added the *prenomén* of his patron, *Livius*, to his own name, and brought upon the *Roman stage* the first regular drama, which all ranks of the city went, in throngs, to hear and to see, and from whence they returned, beyond measure, delighted. This was about two years after the first *Punic*, or *Carthaginian*, war, which was concluded in the year 512, of the city, 240 years before Christ.

*Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, & artes
Intulit agresti Latio. Sic horridus ille
Defluxit numerus Saturnius, & grave virus
Munditiæ pepulere; sed in longum tamen ævum
Manferunt, hodieque manent vestigia ruris.
Serus enim Græcis admovit acumina chartis:
Et post Punica bella quietus quærere cæpit,*

Quid

*Quid Sophocles & Theſpis & Æſchylus utile ferrent,
Tentavit quoque rem dignè ſi vertere poſſet.**

HOR. *Epist.* 1. *lib.* 2.

About a year after this *Ennius*, the famous poet, who invented the *Latin Hexameters*, was born at *Rudes*, or *Rudia*, a city of *Calabria*. *Andronicus*, being converſant with the ſtage exhibitions and poets of his native country, is ſuppoſed to have taken the models of his plays from *Ariſtophanes*, *Theſpis*, *Æſchyles*, &c. and it was this *Andronicus* that introduced the firſt true clafſical poetry among the *Romans*. Having thus given, as well as I was able, the hiſtory and manner of the ancient poetry of that famous people, and having laughed heartily, or ſighed bitterly, at ſome of their ſuperſtitious, at the ſuperſtitious of their modern deſcendants, and, again, of their followers, as well as of our own ſuperſtitious follies and madneſs, I will cloſe the whole with a paſſage from the learned author of the *Memoirs* of the Court of *Auguſtus*.†

“*Andronicus*, *Livy’s* Slave was a native of *Greece*, whoſe genius and learning not only procured him his liberty, and made him *Tutor* to his maſter’s children, but

* When conquer’d Greece brought in her captive Arts,
She triumph’d o’er her ſavage Conquerors’ Hearts;
Taught our rough verſe its Numbers to refine,
And our rude Style with elegance to ſhine.
And yet ſome Traces of this ruſtic Vein
For a long age remain’d, and ſtill remain.
For it was late before our bards inquir’d
How the dramatic Muſe her Greeks inspir’d;
How Æſchylus and Theſpis form’d the Stage;
And what improv’d the Sophoclean page.
Then to their favourite Pieces we applied,
Proud to tranſlate, nor unſucceſſful tried.

FRANCIS.

† I have been very full in the notes, as the authors referred to are in very few hands, in this Commonwealth.

but raised him afterwards to be the *Favourite* of the Roman People; for so delighted were they with his performance on the stage, and so charmed with a solemn Hymn of his composition, which the sudden turn of the *second Punic War* made them firmly believe the GODS had heard,* that they assigned to him a Porch of the Temple of *Pallas* on the *Aventine* hill where he might represent his own plays, and where his scholars and admirers might erect statues in honour of the POET. Yet his pieces must either have been wondrous *simple*; or he must have assumed many different characters in their recital; since he himself was for some time the sole actor, assisted only by the music of a flute. The progress from this extreme simplicity to the vast pomp of both the ancient and modern theatre deserves our attention.

"The ROMANS having got their first taste of the stage, grew so fond of *Andronicus* and of his plays, that they persecuted him with perpetual acting; and recalled him so often to sing his own compositions, that at length his voice broke, and he was forced to beg leave to introduce a youth, who should stand before the musician, and sing the *recitative* part for his relief. When this was granted, it was observed, that the poet (that is, the *player*) performed the piece with more spirit, and represented the passions with a more

* CARMINE Di superi placantur, CARMINE Manes.
HORAT.

"I take this to be the hymn which his namesake, *Titus Livius* the historian, says seven and twenty young ladies were getting by heart, to sing it in honour of *JUNO*, when the lightning glanced upon her temple: They afterwards sung it walking in procession, and dancing to their own music: The historian with his usual candour adds, *that perhaps, in that rude age, Livy's verse might sound sweet to the ear; but would now appear harsh and uncouth, were it repeated.*"

a more lively gesture than formerly, as he was not now obliged *constantly* to strain his voice ; and from thence the custom of having *one to bear a part*, and sing to the players, was first introduced, and nothing but the DIALOGUE was left to be spoke by the chief actor."

F I N I S.



C O R R I G E N D A.

PAGE 3, line 4, read *BARTHELEMI*. P. 22, 8th l. from the bottom, *7500*
P. 26, l. 25, for *thow*, read *thew*. P. 27, l. 7, *imaginary* read *imaginary*.
P. 31, l. 10, read *THEATRE*. P. 35, l. 3d from the bottom, *fortuna*. P. 42,
l. 2, after the word *them*, insert *caution* against. P. 46, l. 6, for *fat*, read *set*.
P. 49, 8th, l. after number insert *of*. P. 49, l. 16, read not to be *righteous over*
much, not to act the part of brutish Churls. P. 50, 3d l. of the note, read of whom.
P. 55, 4th l. from the bottom, read *sublatam* and *invidi*. P. 73, note, read *pueri*.
P. 82, l. 10, for *were*, read *was*. P. 85, 5th l. of the note, read *Jonson*. P. 87,
24th l. read *dissolute*. P. 93, 2d l. *dele*, at that time. P. 97, 5th, 6th, l, from
the bottom, *dele*, the profits of. P. 112, 15th l. *corana*, read *corona*. P. 114,
2d l. of the note, read *alternisue*. P. 114, 16th l. of the note, *Retulit*. P. 122,
l. 24th, *dele*, says *Quintilian*. P. 127, l. 21st, read *Hetruria*. P. 131, l. 15th,
adapted. P. 9, last line, for *nascitur* read *nascitur*. P. 32, l. 5th of the note
avriſpoph and in line 7th and 9th, read *Antiſtrophē*.

1 AUG 66

¶ The necessary attendance in the House of Representatives, during the present
Spring Session of the General Court, has so engrossed the Author's time, that he could
not pay that attention he could have wished, to the Proof Sheets; therefore, if the
reader should discover any other errors than the above, he is requested to correct the
same.

BOSTON, JUNE 25, 1792.

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